

“She, This in Blak”

Vision, Truth, and Will in Geoffrey

Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde



T. E. Hill

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To Susan

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Chapter One

Introduction and Background

Nearly two decades have passed since the publication of William Courtenay's fundamental guide to late scholastic thought and culture, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England*, presented in part as what the author hoped would become "a companion to Chaucer studies and to Middle English literature."¹ At the time of its publication, pioneering forays that sought to link themes and approaches of late medieval literature to the writings of William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, and their contemporaries were just beginning to draw on revised assessments of late scholastic thought by Moody, Oberman, and others to open a new door in medieval literary studies.² In the years that have followed, a wealth of books and articles have appeared that serve to illustrate Courtenay's introductory remarks regarding the interpenetration of the worlds of Oxford and London in the fourteenth century by revealing the degree to which scholastic issues and trends inform the vernacular literature of the period, including the works of Chaucer.³ The present study takes a fresh look at Chaucer's great Trojan romance, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in light of recent scholarship on late medieval discussions of certitude and volition as they pertain to human perception and judgment.

That Chaucer's poetry would be concerned with philosophical problems and their social consequences should be of no surprise to contemporary students of medieval literature. For medieval poetic language, as Eugene Vance remarked: "is always in part a metalanguage, and embodies an ethical consciousness that translates into palpable human terms problems of signification that logicians such as Abelard, Peter of Spain, or William of Ockham approached abstractly."⁴ Moreover, during the late fourteenth century the relation between theory, epitomized by the specialized topics and methodologies that formed the basis of academic achievement in England during the first half of the century, and practice, embodied in the practical theology and

philosophy that characterized a general societal shift in intellectual and cultural currents during the second half, was increasingly at issue. Although critics of the relevance of the deliberations of the schools such as Richard Fitzralph—who wrote of his conversion from a life spent “croaking in the marshes” of Oxford to a more direct form of spiritual encounter—reflect one side of this ambivalence, poets such as Gower, Langland, and Chaucer undertook to explore and mediate these tensions by vivifying scholastic topics and formulas within the imaginative landscapes of their poetic narratives.⁵ By doing so they participated in a wider intellectual movement that sought to appropriate and apply learning that had once been the exclusive province of the clergy to the burgeoning legal, administrative, and cultural requirements of a secular world that was growing ever more complex and needful of new ways to envision and organize itself. Although the intellectual excitement and inventiveness that characterized developments in the English arts and theology faculties before the 1350’s waned in the years following, late fourteenth-century England seems to have been a place where the topics of the schools found new relevance in the world at large.

In considering Chaucer’s treatment of contemporary discourses on truth and will I approach this material, as Chaucer did, “frontwards”—that is, as an outgrowth of and response to high scholastic formulations of the human soul and its relation to nature.⁶ For as Katherine Tachau has demonstrated, shifting and sometimes competing theories of representation and causality characteristic of fourteenth-century thought did not displace the interconnected body of scientific, epistemological, and semantic theory developed in the thirteenth century comprised by the optical science of *perspectiva*.⁷ Rather, late-scholastic intellectual markers such as intuitive cognition, terminist epistemology and logic, calculatory physics, and voluntarist ethics evolved from or were utilized in attempts to address theoretical and practical difficulties of perspectivist theory, and, together with the rise of covenantal theology, provided a space for its continued place in the arts curriculum well into the sixteenth century.

Chaucer participates in this scholastic approach to the past in his literary practice in that he does not discard the old for the new but develops “new themes by appropriating as wide a range of sources as could be put to use.”⁸ While it is difficult to know what academic sources Chaucer was directly acquainted with with any surety, we can surmise that he was influenced by obvious philosophical and doctrinal authorities such as Aristotle, Augustine, and Boethius, as well as by more contemporary figures and schools of thought including Holcot, Strode, the Mertonians, and the anti-Pelagianism of Bradwardine and Wycliffe.⁹

Chaucer's theoretical influences also include monuments of the literary genre of the philosophical vision, a form he experimented with throughout his life. Among the philosophical visions we know Chaucer was familiar with are Boethius's *De consolacione philosophia* and the *Roman de la Rose*, which he translated into English, as well as Dante's *Commedia* and Alain de Lille's *Liber de planctu naturae*.¹⁰ From its appearance in late antiquity the philosophical vision, as allegory, was concerned with examining the structure and conduct of the microcosm of the soul in its relation to the macrocosm of the universe. While clearly influenced by Neo-platonic metaphysics, with the influence of Aristotle in the twelfth century the high medieval philosophical vision came to be characterized by its efforts to define the role of nature in mediating the relation between God and the soul, and to delineate the usefulness of the arts and sciences in comprehending this relation. The philosophical visions of thirteenth-century authors such as Jean de Meun and Dante incorporated developments of perspectivist science into the genre by emphasizing point-of-view and the abstraction of knowledge from perceptual experience.¹¹ As Kathryn Lynch, Suzanne Akbari, and J. Stephen Russell have made evident, Chaucer's writings, including of course his own dream visions, take this literature as a starting point in their concern with problems of truth and causality in both science and poetry—two realms of learning to which Chaucer was deeply committed.¹²

In the following chapters I argue that in *Troilus and Criseyde* Chaucer addresses difficulties concerning representation and will inherent in the perspectivist model of perception and cognition by couching the activities of *scientia* within a wider framework of covenantal causality as it is expressed in the theological doctrine of the dialectic of divine power that differentiates between God's absolute omnipotence and his self-delimiting ordained power, or his "capacity and volition." Within this framework Troilus, Pandarus, and Criseyde represent disparate accounts of the perceiving soul and differing philosophies of truth and signification that exist in counterpoint, but do not negate one another. These differences I explain according to a paradigm of divergent models of monetary valuation offered in a recent study of the influence of late medieval economic forces on fourteenth-century natural philosophy by the historian Joel Kaye. Accordingly, Troilus represents the traditional perspectivist attitude toward perception and cognition, one in which the proper connection between *res* and *verbum* is assumed to be substantial, certain, and causally determined. In distinction to Troilus, Pandarus is portrayed as the practitioner of a more "modern" calculatory approach to truth, where the relationship between object and concept is only knowable within an estimated latitude, and where value is defined as

a product of self-interest. Despite their differences, Troilus and Pandarus share a fundamental impetus toward scientific applications of vision in their perceptual and signifying behavior, which, motivated by a mistrust of the unseen, ultimately fails them as a means of effectively comprehending, influencing, or otherwise coming to terms with the events unfolding around them. In contrast, Criseyde is portrayed as a voluntarist *viator* who accepts the darkness in which the universe of the knowable is bound, and who is able to act in a context of uncertainty by trusting to the intuited intentionality of her will when the resources of reason have been exhausted. Clearly cognizant of the limitations of *scientia*, Criseyde's own cognitive and signifying practices express the covenantal notion known as *facienti quod in se est*, or that God is obliged to "justify" those who do their best, and are characterized by careful attentiveness to her texts, right reason (*recta ratio*), and by blind but deliberate acts of trust, or assumptions of shared good intention.

In my reading of Criseyde's intuitive, voluntarist approach to perception and cognition I build upon the work of those scholars who situate Chaucer's work within the philosophical context of fourteenth-century covenantal theology, including Russell A. Peck, Richard J. Utz, and Lois Roney. Much of this scholarship was influenced by the groundbreaking work of Sheila Delany, who argued in her essay, "Undoing Substantial Connection: The Late Medieval Attack on Analogical Thought," that Chaucer turned "from allegory to other modes of representation in order to express his vision of a profoundly contingent world."¹³ Insightful as I believe this approach to be, it has not occurred to those few who have attempted to apply it to *Troilus and Criseyde* that as a view into subject-formation it better serves to illuminate the portrayal of Criseyde's perceptual and intellectual behavior than it does that of Troilus, who has generally been considered to be the philosophical focus of the narrative.¹⁴ For although Troilus's Boethian rationalism has been often noted, Criseyde's own carefully structured approach to perception and judgment has never adequately been accounted for.¹⁵

PERSPECTIVA

In order to consider the intellectual basis of Chaucer's treatment of problems of human perception, judgment, and communication in *Troilus and Criseyde*, it is necessary to supply a brief description of the science and psychology of light developed at Oxford and Paris in the early thirteenth century, as well as an account of its theological and philosophical reception over the ensuing century and a half. *Perspectiva*, as it was formulated by Robert

Grosseteste, Roger Bacon and their followers, constituted a synthesis of geometrical, physical, metaphysical, and physiological theories of light and vision drawn from newly accessible commentaries on Aristotle by Al-Kindi, Alhazen, Avicenna, and Averroes, supplemented by other newly translated as well as previously known works treating visual theory by Euclid, Galen, Calcidius, Boethius, Augustine, and others.¹⁶ At the core of this body of theory was the notion of the visual ray, often termed *intentiones* or *species*, by means of which the visible object, the perceiving eye, and the judging mind are brought into contact. *Species* were variously construed by various sources as emanating from the eye to the object seen (“extramission”), from the object to the eye (“intromission”), or some combination of the two. Although *perspectiva* proper was primarily concerned with the geometrical behavior of light in the process of intromission, it was a science not only of visual perception but of cognition, and, by extension, semantics as well.¹⁷ For in their attempt to secure the psycho-physiological foundations of visual certification Grosseteste and his successors believed they were formulating the basis for a scientific methodology for the experiential study of nature whose sole criteria of truth would be logical coherence and experimental verification.¹⁸ Through his refinement of Grosseteste’s notion of the “multiplication of *species*” into a universal theory of causal forces to which the faculties of the mind are assimilated in the process of abstraction, Roger Bacon forged the essential theoretical connections that linked object, thought, and word in the veridical apprehension of the real.¹⁹

The epistemology of abstraction was based upon an integrated anatomical and physiological system consisting of the five external senses and a hierarchical order of “internal senses.” The internal senses were cerebral faculties corresponding to specific compartments of the brain in which sense data was systematically processed before it was submitted to the higher rational faculties. Although medieval theorists sometimes number and construe the internal senses differently, in general they follow the pattern described by Avicenna.²⁰ They are: the common sense (*sensus communis*), which directly receives and compares impressions from the external senses; the retentive imagination or sense-memory (*imaginatio*), which temporarily retains these impressions or images; the deliberative imagination or imagination proper (*imaginativa*), which reconstitutes these images or creates new images from them; the estimative faculty (*estimativa*), which perceives simple forms in these images such as danger and attraction; and the recollection or memory (*memoria*), in which the objects of estimation as well as *species* abstracted by the rational faculties are stored and conserved.²¹ Both the internal and external faculties are organs of the animal soul that, together

with the intellective functions (practical and theoretical) of the rational soul, provide the basis for human perception and cognition. That the abstraction of thought from sensation could, through a proper distillation of terms, constitute a refinement of reality into a pure mental vocabulary capable of signifying truth became a fundamental assumption of scholastic logic. Thus, as Katherine Tachau observes, "light and words were knotted together," in so much as "vision was crucial to the explanation of the acquisition of concepts, [and] these in turn were the focal point during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of increasing precision on truth and falsity."²²

PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTATION AND NECESSITY

Soon after the introduction of perspectivist teachings into the curriculum of the arts faculties its proponents were confronted by a series of objections and challenges. Theologically, *perspectiva's* incorporation of much of Aristotle's account of the ontology of the soul and the nature of causality brought aspects of the theory into direct conflict with Church doctrine on the uniqueness and free agency of the individual soul. This eventually resulted in the formal Condemnations issued in Paris in the 1270's by Bishop Stephen Tempier, proscribing the teaching of many tenets of perspectivist thought. On purely philosophical grounds, perspectivist epistemology was subject to objections as it came to be scrutinized for problems of logical validity in the increasingly discursive atmosphere of the universities. On the practical side, although perspectivist geometry may have been influential in the development of evaluative methodologies for mediating economic and physical change, the emanationist, metaphysical side of the theory essential to Grosseteste's synthesis assumed a fixed and eternal *ordo rerum* that mitigated against the measurement and regulation of a world in flux.

Among the philosophical challenges to *perspectiva*, the greatest by far focused upon the nature and function of *species*—the guarantors of the connection between object, sense, and reason. At issue was the ontological status of *species*. How could qualities of corporeal objects in the extramental world (*species rei*) partake of the same reality as a non-corporeal mental concept (*species intelligibilis*)?²³ The characterization of *species* as rays or mediating entities between object and concept (*species in medio*) was no less problematic: if *species* are material, why are they not seen as they pass through the medium; if they are spiritual entities, how can they be generated by "less noble" physical objects?

These ontological questions bore directly on the epistemological problem of certitude. If extramental objects and the concepts they generate in the

mind do not share a common nature, how can any object be known in-and-of-itself? How can there be any necessary connection between mind and reality? How can we believe that what we see is true? For even if we grant that intelligible *species* in the intellect can somehow reliably represent their sensible counterparts, what can we then claim to truly know except the representation itself?²⁴ By the mid-fourteenth century anxieties over the problem of cognitive representation had become, in Katherine Tachau's words, "virtually *de rigueur*" in scholastic discussions concerning knowledge and language.²⁵

For some theorists, a possible answer to the problem of intellectual representation was to be found in the causal relationship that *species* were held to establish between thought and object, since the action of *species* was commonly construed to be twofold: to provide the content of our cognitions and to bring these cognitions about. For there is a sense wherein one can say one knows an object directly in so much as this knowledge has been caused by the object. If the argument to causality offered any harbor for the *species* theory from the perils of having to account for the representational cognition of singulars, however, it placed it squarely up against another philosophical as well as theological hazard, that of cognitive determinism. If our concepts and mental activities stand in a causal relationship to material or formal conditions and circumstances, how can we lay any claim to free choice concerning these activities?

In the patristic tradition, where signs as well as the objects they signify are regarded as veils to a truth yet to be fully revealed, neither the question of free choice nor the problem of representation were at issue: the inadequacy of the sign was taken for granted and freedom of choice had been defined clearly by Augustine as the willingness to accept revealed truth on faith. However, as thirteenth-century scholars began to accept Aristotle's conceptualization of science and his assertion that the universe as it is perceived through our senses is inherently knowable, they found themselves having to negotiate between the rock of representationalism and the hard place of necessitarianism. If the "truth of a thing" can be grasped with certitude, then either the mind imposes its truth on the thing or the thing impresses its truth on the mind, or some mediating mechanism has to be found. The perspectivists had attempted this mediation on one level by endeavoring to reconcile two source traditions regarding the notion of *species*: one based on extramission and the other on intromission.²⁶ Thus, Bacon specified a causal relationship between forms multiplied from objects in the world and our sensible impressions of them, while at the same time he held that our understanding of these impressions derives from their illumination by the active power of the intellect.²⁷ The noetic side of this theory of

knowledge, however, was markedly different from that espoused by Augustine. For the apprehension of truth was no longer a matter of one's personal and willed acceptance of the radiance of the divine word. It was now the necessary product of a transcendent mechanism of intellection tied to perception and constrained only by the sensory and intellectual receptivity of the individual soul.

Although Bacon held that the intellect has the capacity to know singulars both as a matter of causation and as a matter of likeness, he did not make it clear how the intellect, which is universal in nature and whose logical objects are universals, is able to grasp this singularity. Moreover, although he attempted to explain the apprehension of universal knowledge by individual souls, he also held the view of Avicenna and Averroes that the active power of the reason or agent intellect (*intellectus agentis*) is not differentiated among these souls—a logical consequence of the emanationist position that knowledge is universal and radiates from God.²⁸ This rendered Bacon's epistemology ultimately incompatible with Church doctrine on sin, merit, and the afterlife, and vulnerable to theological charges of necessitarianism.

Thomas Aquinas offered a solution to the problem of individual choice by attacking the "Averroist" notion of the unicity of the intellect as a misreading of Aristotle.²⁹ In its place, Thomas offered an interpretation of Aristotle's psychological categories and their functions in which a purely individual agent intellect activates an equally individual potential intellect with abstracted intelligible *species*.³⁰ This model presented Thomas with the basis for a solution to the problem of individual free choice in so far as it provided for human free agency in the judgmental operations of a particular human soul. To it, Thomas added his own revolutionary assertion that the soul, abstracting on its own, could achieve intellectual certitude.³¹ For although Grosseteste, Bacon, and the early perspectivists provided a partial basis for certitude in the illuminative role of the agent intellect, Thomas, wishing to fully free the soul from implications of divine causation in cognition, did not. For Thomas, the application of the abstractive capacity of the individual reason, the *lumen naturale* of the mind, upon *species* multiplied from their objects is a sufficient condition for the validation of terms toward the certain apprehension of necessary truths.³²

Thomas's formulation of the soul presented its own problems for Church teaching on free will, however. Like most of his contemporaries, Thomas conceived of free will in terms of free choice or decision: "*liber arbitrium*," the term most often used in discussions on the nature of will before the 1270s.³³ Thomas took the position that the freedom in free decision was primarily a property of the reason in so far as the will is obliged to follow the

dictates of reason concerning what the reason judges to be good, *sub ratione boni*, even though the will does, in an operational way, make the choice. Hence, free choice is strictly a matter of rational judgment, not to be contravened by what Thomas regarded as an essentially passive if appetitive will. This assertion, however, was identified in the condemned articles of 1277 as a violation of doctrine.³⁴ To Bishop Tempier, the notion of rational necessity posed as much of a threat to the belief that the individual soul could freely choose between good and evil as the necessitarian implications of divine influence in the perspectivist reformulation of emanationist epistemology that Thomas was attempting to correct.

FOURTEENTH-CENTURY RESPONSES

The theological reaction to Averroist and other “radical” interpretations of Aristotle that the Condemnations formalized helped to stimulate a conceptual shift concerning the place of nature in the relationship between creature and creator. This shift was characterized by revised formulations of the soul that placed an emphasis on will and interior experience rather than on representation and necessity, and by the generation of new languages for analyzing truth values in nature. In the former instance, the discourse that ensued would become, by Chaucer’s time, what William Courtenay described as a “total analysis of human motivation and behavior that would theoretically cover daily experience and interpersonal relations as well as religious experience.”³⁵ In the latter case, the rise of terminism and the analytic “measure languages” of fourteenth-century natural philosophy provided a means for addressing both theoretical and practical problems of signification and measurement in an age that found itself increasingly in need of formulae for coming to terms with social and economic challenges as well as theological and philosophical ones. As a result, the century saw an explosion of scientific interest in the quantification of natural phenomena, when, as John Murdoch describes, “there arose a veritable furor to measure all things possible.”³⁶

Although neither Grosseteste nor Bacon had concerned themselves with the role of the will in their development of a psychology of vision, the Condemnations brought a sense of urgency to the question of the relation of the will to the intellect. This set the stage for a growing debate between the defenders of Thomas’s intellectualist position and voluntarist proponents of an emerging conception of the will understood as an entity independent of and superior to the intellect itself. One of the early advocates of voluntarism was Bonaventure, who taught that freedom resides in the will, not the reason,

and that the intellect is commanded by the will. Bonaventure's Franciscan successors, including William de la Mare, argued that the will not only commands the reason, but is able to act against the judgments of reason, citing for their authority Bernard of Clairvaux, who had described the reason as the "handmaid of the will."³⁷ Peter Olivi took the concept a step further by defining the will as a "totally active" faculty that bears no necessary relation to the intellect at all, but that is "the sufficient efficient principle of its own acts."³⁸ Duns Scotus also supported the superiority of the will, arguing that the will's primary virtue, charity, and its object, goodness, were superior to the chief virtue and object of the intellect, prudence and truth. As the fourteenth century got underway the ground was prepared for a thoroughgoing inquiry into the cognitive act of judgment, informed by a new notion of free will now generally referred to as *voluntas libera*. Before a psychology of will could emerge to supplement and, for some theorists, displace the psychology of light, however, the role and mechanisms of causality in the certification of truth developed by the perspectivists would have to be reassessed to take into account the individual experience of the action of the unmoved will in the cognitive judgment of sense perceptions. By foregrounding the direct experience of singulars in the apprehension of mental and extramental phenomena, the notion of intuitive cognition and the nominalist critique of universals provided a basis for this reassessment.

Early in the fourteenth century Duns Scotus developed an explanation of perception that incorporated much of the perspectivist account, but which addressed the problem of certitude by positing that, concurrent with the multiplication of *species* that defines abstractive cognition, a direct, naturally caused "intuitive cognition" of reality occurs without the intermediation of *species*. In Scotus's formulation, intuitive cognition is a direct perception by the mind of the existence of a thing per se. Scotus classified intuitive cognition into two types: one concerning external objects manifested through the senses, and another of internal states, including the soul's own acts, such as the will's volitions and the cognitions of the intellect.³⁹

For William of Ockham, the concept of intuitive cognition not only provided a notion of certification based upon direct perception, but obviated any need to account for perception by means of *species* altogether. Ockham argued that the visual act is direct and intuitive, neither requiring nor producing an intermediate representation or likeness.⁴⁰ Ockham further held that intuitive cognition, whether sensible or intellectual, is always necessarily of singular phenomena, and that, as abstraction of existent universals from sense data cannot be explained without assuming the existence of *species*, universals are thus not objects in reality but merely mental and verbal terms

for similarly-occurring characteristics of individual beings (“nothing is universal save by signification”).⁴¹ Concepts for Ockham are not substantial forms but qualities or habits derived directly from experience, or secondarily, from the association of experience with purely linguistic entities.

Ockham’s understanding of the nature of terms as they function in propositions led him to an account of *scientia* that supported the perspectivists’ emphasis on the importance of visual evidence, but which diverged from their metaphysical assumptions in that the knowledge derived from this evidence was not about universal forms, but about the propositional terms in which this evidence was formulated. Defining thought as nothing other than mental language, Ockham’s philosophical project was thus a linguistic one, and he found in the terminist logic of Peter of Spain and William of Sherwood a well-suited methodology for eliminating purely abstract entities from propositional statements. Ockham systematized and applied this methodology to argue that common abstract terms such as “whiteness” refer not to independently existing universal substances but to the composites of similar qualities of singular objects which they connote. Through his expansion of the notion of supposition, which explores the meta-linguistic referentiality of terms, and his investigation of tensed propositions, which situate propositional objects in time and take into consideration their mutability, Ockham placed additional constraints upon the valid uses of terms in logical statements. Although Ockham’s complete rejection of *species* was not widely accepted by his contemporaries, his reformulation of terminist logic had a revolutionary effect on the intellectual history of the fourteenth century. The *logica moderna* quickly became an indispensable means for determining not only the truth value of philosophical propositions, but for assessing the value of statements in physics and theology as well. It was taught as the basic instrument of discourse in both the arts and the theology faculties, even by those who did not accept the position of nominalist epistemology on universals.⁴²

In his rejection of universal forms, Ockham abandoned the notion of intrinsic causality, that is, that effects are latent within and deducible from the metaphysical nature of their causes. Although Ockham held that the perceptions of intuitive cognition are naturally and efficiently caused, and that certain simple evident concepts or terms about such perceptions are also naturally produced (as natural signs), he argued that our knowledge of causal relationships in nature is dependent upon judgments concerning our intuitive cognitions of sequences of events, rejecting in general the notion of *a priori* knowledge.⁴³ Thus, the accumulated body of abstract judgments that

define *scientia* are dependent for Ockham upon a faith in the regularity and uniformity of nature, as well as upon direct experience.

Ockham's faith in the dependability of the natural order derives from the theological doctrine of the dual aspects of divine power, which distinguishes between God's omnipotent capacity (*potentia absoluta Dei*) and his volition to adhere to his covenants (*potentia ordinata Dei*) in the exercise of this power. This doctrine, which grew out of twelfth-century discussions over the efficacy of the sacraments, allowed for the existence of a contingent causality in the created universe and at the same time provided for a God who is free from this causality.⁴⁴ Although not exclusive to terminist or nominalist thinkers, the distinction between capacity and volition was an essential aspect of the covenantal theology that Ockham and his adherents adopted, securing for them the dependability of the natural order while simultaneously insulating against accusations of Pelagianism, since natural causality is ultimately contingent upon the covenantal causality of the divine will. The idea became a characteristic feature of fourteenth-century voluntarism, which emphasized God's transcendent will while it continued to place a premium on the active will of the individual soul in matters of faith and grace.

In the fourteenth century the notions of the dual aspects of divine power, nominalism, and the general acceptance of terminist logic served to moderate the high scholastic program of the thirteenth-century *summas* by promoting a sense of remoteness from God and of the limitations of reason. However, these new modes of thinking about worldly experience also gave impetus and form to new and energetic discourses in natural philosophy and theology, particularly through their contribution to the development of new technical languages in which these discourses were carried out.⁴⁵ For the physical and metaphysical realms could now be explored independently within a framework of logical conceivability or possibility, *secundum imaginationem*, rather than as related actualities. Within this new framework the key problems of representation and causality were thus no longer at issue, for the criteria of truth were now primarily a matter of logical coherence and consignification, with little or no regard for empirical validation. Terminist logic was ideally suited to this effort, along with new conceptual formulae for measuring motion and quantity that further denatured the physical phenomena under investigation in their deployment of a letter calculus.⁴⁶ As a science of definition and rule testing, this new methodology was highly invested in demonstration and mathematical reasoning—despite the exceptionally inventive nature of the testing itself, which included profuse use of *insolubilia*, paradoxes, and *sophismata*.

In his provocative study on the rise of late scholastic natural philosophy, Joel Kaye situates these new approaches to nature within the volatile economic climate that followed the commercial revolution of the thirteenth century, when unstable social conditions brought about by the rapid monetization of European society created an impetus in legal, philosophical, and theological circles to revise traditional theories of exchange based upon notions of divine order and knowable perfections for more workable models of market equalization.⁴⁷ In the wake of these pressures, fourteenth-century scholars developed new mechanisms for determining market value that included voluntaristic models based on mutual good intention between buyer and seller (proposed by Scotus), as well as calculatory models developed by theorists such as Ockham, Nicholas Oresme, and John Buridan, which replaced the ideal points of equality of traditional theory with geometrically-derived, approximate ranges of value. These later theories abandoned the metaphysical underpinnings of the traditional view of determining the just price that had been fostered by theorists such as Henry of Ghent and Thomas Aquinas—in which equalization required an active intelligence performing an arithmetic judgment—and substituted a more mechanistic model of markets as self-ordering, supra-personal systems in which currency serves as an instrument to measure relative latitudes of worth based primarily upon extrinsic conditions such as scarcity and demand.⁴⁸ Kaye demonstrates that the new logico-mathematic conceptualization of the natural order characterized in the scientific writings of the Oxford Calculators at Merton College and their Parisian successors was to a great extent the product of this innovative understanding of economic value:

At the cusp of the fourteenth century, a conception of nature incorporating the geometric model of market equalization was taking shape. The new model was more concerned with process than result, more with relations than perfections. It operated within ranges and mathematical limits rather than according to a precise numbered plan. . . . The result was a conception no less rational than the earlier one, even though more accepting of estimation, approximation, and probability.⁴⁹

By severing scientific investigation from metaphysics, the natural philosophers of the fourteenth century were thus able to pursue the program of Grosseteste and Bacon to delineate the geometry of nature, but they could do so now armed with a license to take the fluidity and mutability of the natural entities they sought to understand as quantifiable phenomena. For their new forms of calculation were now based upon dynamic ratios rather than

on static representations of universal constants. Within this context more traditional studies in the sciences, including those of *perspectiva* and *astrologia*, flourished side by side with, and were now in part secured by, those discourses that argued the contingent character and uncertain truth of such knowledge.⁵⁰

The new calculatory methods that were utilized for questions of natural philosophy were just as enthusiastically applied to problems of theology. In these discourses theological "qualities" such as grace, beatitude, and charity were quantified and analyzed, while the most basic assumptions of faith were ruthlessly questioned, *secundum imaginationem*, as matters of logical possibility. Within a covenantal framework, however, such knowledge could admittedly provide only a limited and insufficient understanding of the order of salvation. True *sapientia*, or knowledge of God, was reserved for the beatified and for rare instances of direct revelation. Nonetheless, theologians such as Ockham and Holcot argued that one is able to approach God through the theological principle in which God is bound *ex pacto* to reward with his grace and "justify" those who adhere to his covenant by "doing what is in one," or doing the best one can: "*facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam*."⁵¹ According to this principle, by making the best use of one's natural capacities one can perceive and enjoy a measure of wisdom concerning the Creator through one's disposition to seek the Good. These capacities necessarily include the application of *recta ratio* or "right reason," a form of prudence involving a movement of the will toward the Good perceived as inward, intuitable intention.⁵² Thus, "doing what is in one" comprises a psychological act that involves all the faculties of the soul acting in unison, and has a moral as well as intellectual dimension.⁵³ The nature of the wisdom sought is consonant with the revealed truths available through sacred scripture concerning those essential articles of faith deemed necessary for salvation, foremost of which is the love of God.

The principle of *facienti quod in se est* was supported by the theological precept that the Creator can be known through his creatures and especially through the human creature who is made in his image—a notion that had long been associated with a tradition of natural law defined in Gratian and refined by the early Franciscan masters in concepts such as *synderesis*, or the spark of conscience. Some scholars, including Holcot, argued that such wisdom was available to those who had no contact with revealed scripture, including Hermes Trismegistus and Aristotle, who were believed to have arrived at spiritual truths by using their natural powers.

The larger soteriological notion of justification had been an important part of Church theology since the time of Augustine. As a theological doctrine

defining a process for the remission of sin, justification had an important epistemological aspect in that this process included a necessary ontological rectification of the soul and its faculties, sensitive and intellectual, in preparation for salvation. By the twelfth century it was described by a series of movements that included the infusion of grace, contrition, and remission or acceptance, preceded by a stage of preparation. In the thirteenth century this process became an integral part of the theology of penance and, with the elevation of penance in the evolving sacerdotal system of the Church after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, a necessary passage in the economics of salvation.

Although the notion of *facienti quod in se est* was accepted by intellectualist theologians such as Aquinas, for voluntarist *moderni* such as Ockham and Holcot it became a central soteriological principle and a primary expression of the notion of capacity and volition itself. For in their view, the gift of grace obtained by making the best use of one's natural capacities is not the instrumental effect of such acts but is extended *ex pacto*. There is, accordingly, no certitude of grace. The commitment is not binding upon God *potentia absoluta* but is upheld by him through his covenantal agreement. Thus, although the concept of natural law remains a feature of the doctrine of doing what is in one, the juridical nature of this agreement overrides the claim of natural law by placing the transaction between creature and Creator in the context of positive law, emphasizing will over causality. Within this context the psychological act is meritorious not in-and-of-itself but only when it has been freely accepted as such by God, for in a covenantal framework good and evil are absolutely contingent upon God's will. Similarly, on the human side of the equation, the disposition or intention that motivates the individual virtuous action coupled with God's predictable response of grace are what define the value of the act *potentia ordinata*, not any quality intrinsic to the act or its effect. It is to this purpose that Ockham and Holcot held that only intentions can be good or bad—not deeds, which, like terms, are subject to changes in context for their meaning—and that only God can ascribe their value as such.

Although voluntarism and the covenantal theology that supported it dominated scholastic discussions of the soul through the fourteenth century, it did not go unchallenged, particularly in the latter half of the century. Despite the fact that Scotus had been influential early in the century in promoting the importance of the will over the intellect, attempts were made to re-establish the primacy of reason by Augustinian and Dominican thinkers such as Giles of Rome and Godfrey of Fontaines. At Oxford the cause was taken up by Thomas Sutton, Nicholas Trivet, and John Buridan, who argued

modified versions of Aquinas's position on the dependence of the will on the intellect.

Voluntarism was also challenged on theological grounds on the question of grace and merit, particularly by Augustinian scholars such as Gregory of Rimini, who came down firmly against the idea that the soul can in any way predicate its own salvation. At Oxford, where the metaphysics of Grosseteste was still influential, conservative reaction to epistemological nominalism and the "Pelagian" elevation of merit was advanced by secular theologians such as Richard Fitzralph, Thomas Bradwardine, and John Wycliffe, whose thought had been influenced by commentaries on Augustine that had become part of the theological curriculum.⁵⁴ In Chaucer's own time disputes over merit and necessity were still being fueled by the resiliency of emanationist metaphysical theory, as well as by determinist and realist doctrines promulgated by those opposed to Scotist and Ockhamist formulations of perception and language, including Wycliffe.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SETTING OF THE NARRATIVE

Chaucer deploys perspectivist mechanics in *Troilus and Criseyde* within the context of these scientific, philosophical, and theological discourses influenced by post-Condemnation concern over the problems of free choice and certitude. Light and vision are thus identified foremost in the poem with force and necessity, so much so that the possibility of free choice is put into question by the optical dynamics of the world of the text. This is most evident in the portrayal of the effect of Criseyde's visual figure on Troilus, his obsession with certitude, his consequent ineffectuality, and the course of events that leads to his own disquisition on merit and future contingency in Book IV in which he comes down on the side of the determinists. But it is also embedded in the strong sense of destiny that pervades the text in its frequent references to fortune, astrological influence, and "Goddess purveyaunce," (4.1046) and in the identification of this destiny with the visible letter of the text itself in the many references by the fictional narrator to the necessary course of the narrative prescribed by his sources.⁵⁵

While Troilus's vision of Criseyde engages the problem of necessity, it also addresses the problem of representation: reflected in Troilus's obsession with Criseyde's constancy or truth. Moreover, through her presentation in the text as an opaque and "slydyng" figure Criseyde serves as a functional emblem of the signifier as it is defined in the linguistic theory of the *moderni*: a *suppositum* indicative of no fixed referent, whose meaning is contingent on its propositional context and the intentions of a perceiver at a particular

point in time (5.825). In so far as her sliding figure evokes the movable latitudes of contemporary natural science, she also provides an opportunity for examining a Mertonian approach to physical phenomena, portrayed by the activity of Pandarus.

The abstraction of Criseyde's visible figure by Troilus and Pandarus as *species* does not represent the total picture of the empirical universe of *Troilus and Criseyde*, however. For the text is equally concerned with the notions of intuitive cognition and voluntarism as alternative expressions of the psychological activity of the soul. This concern is portrayed through Criseyde's own perceptual practices reflected in her capacity for direct perception, her devotion to "good entencioun," her acute awareness of earthly mutability and human limitation, and in her willingness to "maketh vertue of necessite" by trusting to a universe that is beyond her control and comprehension (4.1586). Besides serving as a focus for differing approaches to perception and interpretation in *Troilus and Pandarus*, Criseyde's figure is therefore fashioned to challenge and provide a model for an interpretive act on the reader's own part to supplement the letter of the text with an unspecified gesture of will. This accounts for the remarkable legacy of readerly response her character has elicited over the history of the reception of *Troilus and Criseyde*, beginning, in the text itself, with the affective response of the fictional narrator.

Chaucer addresses the difficulty of evaluating the various approaches to the problem of perception and truth represented in the construction of his subjects in *Troilus and Criseyde* by adopting a covenantal overview in which all three accounts of the perceiving soul and the systems of signification they presuppose are suspended against a larger framework of human intellectual limitation regarding the apprehension of absolute truths. This is to say that, while Chaucer presents the perspectivist account of the influence of *lumen* on human thought and action as a given in the work, he does so as a matter of *potentia ordinata* within a wider context of uncertainty regarding the possible. This apparent unwillingness to categorically commit to a single account of the soul is part of an authorial strategy that in the final view does adopt tactics expressive of a nominalist approach to the contingency of language, where significance derives from individual experience embodied in a system of willed verbal agreements that is ever in flux and devoid of certitude, and where, for Chaucer, the authority for judging what is true is therefore entrusted to the purview of the reader instead of the author. These tactics include the use of translation as a mode of creative discourse, the posing of versions of Chaucer's own figure as author and reader within the text in the characters of the fictional narrator and Pandarus, and the use of other distancing devices, including that of

the framing epilogue. By serving to diminish the authority of the author and elevate that of the reader, these devices contribute to what might be termed a "covenantal" literary and interpretive practice, through which a qualified understanding of the world and one's self is surmised from interpretive responses to particular situations in transmitted texts as a matter of readerly solicitude and "good entencioun."⁵⁶ This methodology is the hallmark of the narrative technique of Chaucer's later work in both the *Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, where the narrator, and by extension the author, never pretends to understand or take responsibility for his subjects fully, but responds to them, or regards them responding to each other, while submitting his account of them to the differing and equally contingent interpretations of his audience. Universal truth can be posited as a possibility in this framework, but it is not asserted with certainty or authority. For meaning in this case derives not from any assumption of substantial connection between word and thing, but from the reader's singular experience of nature combined with a willed trust in the bond between self and other.

Chaucer's use of contemporary epistemological theory thus resembles the approach of those theologians who sought to negotiate between Aristotelian causality and traditional Church doctrine on divine and human freedom by situating the finite realm of the actual within the infinite universe of the possible. As Tachau points out, this simultaneous embrace of two apparently contradictory views of nature was a common feature of fourteenth-century intellectual culture and is characteristic of the work of theorists such as Holcot in that it allows for the assertion that the heavens do, through the principle of the multiplication of species, influence human thought and action, yet affirms, under the rubric of capacity and volition, that these influences are ultimately contingent and therefore cannot be known with certitude.⁵⁷

Much as the theology of the fourteenth century provided a delimiting context for the *scientia* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by framing it within a larger setting of divine remoteness and contingency, the universe in which Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* dwell is a world of light and necessity cast against a backdrop of obscurity and uncertainty. This obscurity is presented through an imagery of darkness and blindness that Chaucer carefully applies to the matter of his sources to create a sense of epistemological distance and to throw into relief the visual forces operative in the formation of concepts. From one perspective, this perceptual and cognitive distance is reflected in the blindness of the inhabitants of Troy concerning the outcome of their war with the Greeks and the fate that awaits their city. It is also represented in the fictional narrator's account of the psychological condition of

the lovers—characterized as blind and in danger of falling into an even deeper “derk disesperaunce”—suspended, as they are, “bitwixen hope and drede” (2.1306–7; 5.630, 1207; 1.36). Darkness and blindness are also used by the narrator to describe his own ignorance of love, as well as the difficulty that the chaotic “blacke wawes” of the “tempestous matere” of Troilus’s love presents for his narrative skill (1.18; 2.1, 5). In each of these cases this blindness is regarded as a short-sightedness or perspectival limitation that can be overcome through illumination and reason, often cast in visual terms as a kind of reading. For Troilus, the way out of darkness is supplied by Pandarus, whose machinations on his behalf are based on a particular facility with light and interpretation, and by Troilus’s own idealized conception of Criseyde, which he describes as a stable light by which he can find his way (5.638–44). The course for the narrator lies in his belief that he can tame his “matere” and overcome his ignorance by rendering the text of his sources exactly through a literal rendering of them (2.1–14).

At a further remove, the darkness in which the inhabitants of the universe of the narrative dwell is representative of their ignorance of the *sapientia* of revealed scripture. Yet within the narrative this is a condition that is not amenable to illumination by any application of *scientia* or method of rational inquiry. It is in this sense that the world of the inhabitants of Troy is representative of the universe of those of Chaucer’s contemporaries who, despite having access to scriptural revelation, felt themselves confronted by a confounding darkness when attempting to come to rational terms with ultimate truths. Yet if these truths could not be comprehended rationally, Christian, and for some, non-Christian alike could have some intuition of the creator through certain acts of the soul, aided by grace, by “doing what is in one.” Thus, the state of darkness portrayed in the poem as an interior condition against which the visible universe of light and its effects are contrasted presents a field in which the psychology of will can be examined alongside and in relation to the science and psychology of light.

Chapter Two

Troilus

In Criseyde's appearance at the temple for the Festival of Palladion, Chaucer's narrator depicts her as Troilus first sees her. Contrasting the blackness of Criseyde's dress with her beauty or brightness, he also compares her to the first letter of the alphabet:

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habit blak; but natheles,
Right as oure firste lettre is now an A,
In beaute first so stood she, makeles.
Hire goodly lokyng gladed al the prees.
Nas nevere yet seyn thyng to ben preysed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre
(1.169–75)

Although at first glance the narrator's simile merely relates the asserted truth of one statement to the obvious truth of another, it suggests a great deal more. Most importantly, it prompts us to consider Troilus's initial vision of Criseyde and his consequent desire as a matter of reading, bringing into play traditional formulations of the relationship between vision, knowledge, and the pleasure of the text that formed the basis of patristic hermeneutic theory.¹ To those of Chaucer's contemporaries familiar with the discourses of the schools, the passage would also call up linguistic and epistemological issues associated with the notions of abstraction and concept formation, including questions about the nature of terms, their objects, and the way they signify.²

The narrator's unusual rhetorical comparison of Criseyde's beauty to the letter "A" evokes this intellectual background by illustrating the abstraction of a concept or *verbum mentis* from an implied experience of Criseyde's

radiated *lumen*, expressed as a written term representing a value within a larger formula. This formula is most obviously the order of the alphabet, but the comparison also calls up associations with the notational practice of assigning letters to values in logical propositions characteristic of fourteenth-century natural philosophy. The first four lines of the stanza in fact resemble in content and form a type of proposition commonly employed in these investigations, the *sophisma*, where an apparently incongruous or paradoxical assertion, often involving qualities of blackness and/or whiteness, is posited upon a qualifying syncategorematic operator ("natheles") in order to test assumptions of logic and language.³ Criseyde's beauty, like the brightness of the star illustrating this proposition, is rendered as a degree of magnitude, a quantified point on a scale of brightness. The provocative element of the formulation, however, from which assertions about the nature of this quantity would be derived were it a true *sophisma*, is the first part, concerning Criseyde's simultaneous blackness.⁴ What is the relationship between her blackness and brightness? Are they contraries, or variant quantities of the same quality? Is either diminished or intensified by the other? Is Criseyde uniformly or difformly bright and dark? Is her degree of brightness a terminus, and as such, an absolute; or is it a latitude?⁵

Of course these questions and the *sophisma* itself are only suggested by the narrator's *descriptio*, which refers merely to Criseyde's black widow's habit and her beauty. Nevertheless, the optical and quantitative language of the passage serve at an important moment in the text to set the stage for Troilus's conceptualization or "reading" of Criseyde. In addition, they provide material for a critique of the relative merits of scientific and literary language for conveying truth.

In both the rhetorical *descriptio* of the narrator and the claim of the implied sophismatic proposition, a quality, Criseyde's beauty, is quantified: she is first in beauty, the brightest and most beautiful "sterre" ever seen up to this time.⁶ Now the rhetorical assertion concerning Criseyde's beauty is not something that one would ordinarily interpret literally: it is clearly hyperbolic and to be read as the literary convention it is. Yet this is precisely the problem that scholastics such as Bonaventure and Aquinas had with poetry and with figurative language in general—they believed its terms to be uncertain with respect to reference and therefore incapable of signifying truth.⁷ From a logical perspective, the quantity here is not what it claims to be: the figure "A" does not truly represent any abstracted term for a quality apprehended by the intellect. More interesting, however, is the fact that the implied proposition formed from Criseyde's visual figure, which might be said to restate the rhetorical assertion in more precise terms, also fails to adequately represent

the narrative subject it is referencing, Criseyde, so that we are able to see the limitations of both types of representation. Certainly, from the perspective of the narrative context, the implied *sophisma* is off the mark as a portrayal of Criseyde in that it is *too* "literal": it depicts Criseyde not as this individual widow, nor even a beautiful woman with a black dress, but as a simultaneously dark and bright object with all the logico-linguistic difficulties this concept activates. One might say it attempts to represent the substance of Criseyde's visible being scientifically, as if it were a term in a optical demonstration whose value or significance can be calculated with mathematical precision.

Both the *sophisma* and the narrator's hyperbolic evaluation of Criseyde's appearance seem to indicate more about the limitations of certain quantifying tendencies of thought and language than they do about Criseyde. Both present a case for the Aristotelian dictum, repeated in Boethius's *De consolacione*, that things are known according to the mode of the knower.⁸ For both forms of portrayal this mode is highly visually determined: on the one hand they derive from Criseyde's visual manifestation alone, and on the other they seek to render this "seyn thing" in proportional terms that can be visualized within a spatial schematic: the linear schema of the alphabet and the mathematic schema implied by the sophismatic calculation. This thing can thus be understood, that is, affirmative or negative propositions can predicated on it, because it can be posited or located within a spatial paradigm. In each type of rendering, however, this visual mode of knowing forces a reduction of Criseyde to, literally, a set of black-and-white terms, suggesting that something is left behind in the movement from sensation to apprehension in concept-formation, and, incidentally, to the recording of experience in black-and-white on the space of the written page. Both practices reduce Criseyde to the status of a visual object whose substance (her light or beauty) can be quantified and therefore evaluated or judged.

The problem of cognitive representation was often formulated as the question of cognizing singulars. How can an individual, unique thing in the world be known in either its singular nature (*quidditas*) or being in the here-and-now with all its individuating accidents (*haecceitas*) by a universal form abstracted from it? The question was frequently illustrated in scholastic discussions by the example of whether one can claim to know Hercules from seeing a picture or statue of Hercules:

Ille non potest scire rem qui non percipit essentiam et quidditatem rei:
sed solum idolum eius. Quia non novit Herculem, qui solum vidit pic-
turam eius. Homo autem nihil percipit de re nisi solum idolum eius, ut

speciem receptam per sensus, quae idolum rei est non ipsa res. Lapis enim non est in anima, sed species lapidis.

One who doesn't perceive the essence or quiddity of a thing, but only its image, can't know the thing. For one who has seen only a picture of Hercules doesn't know Hercules. A human being, however, perceives nothing of a thing, except only its image, that is, a species received through the senses, which is an image of the thing and not the thing itself. For not the stone but a *species* of the stone is in the soul.⁹

Chaucer was certainly familiar with a version of the question as it was formulated by Lady Philosophy in Boethius's *De consolacione*, where it is expressed as a problem of knowledge and reading:

Where wonen now the bones of trewe Fabricius? What is now Brutus or stierne Catoun? The thynne fame yit lastynge of here idel names is marked with a few letters. But althoughe that we han knowen the fayre wordes of the fames of hem, it is nat yvven to knowen hem that ben dede and consumpt.¹⁰

The difficulty suggested by our reading of the narrator's "A"—that a conceptualization of Criseyde based upon the abstraction of quantifiable qualities really doesn't tell us much about Criseyde—should be considered precisely in light of these anxieties concerning cognitive representation.

The narrator's formulative description of Criseyde at the temple with its implications of concept-formation and propositional assertion pre-figures Troilus's own apprehension and conceptualization of Criseyde's visible form. For the way in which Troilus "reads" this form—the way in which Criseyde comes to be inscribed in Troilus's heart and his subsequent cognitive behavior—constitute a similar process of sensation and representation, performed within a framework of perspectivist faculty psychology and propositional logic. It is in this regard noteworthy that both the narrator and Troilus on occasion refer to Criseyde not by name, but as "She, this in blak" (1.309) and "she . . . That stood in blak" (2.533–4). Besides underscoring the abstractive nature of their perception of Criseyde in a way that recalls the ubiquitous black Platos and Socrateses of the formal propositions of the schools, these references point to the importance of the optical impact of Criseyde's image, particularly upon Troilus, and to the link between the intelligible and sensible defined in the notion of *species*.¹¹

The perspectivist mechanics of Troilus's enamorment are presented in the text within the framework of the "fatal glance" topos. Chaucer makes use of this convention in several of his works, his most elaborate treatment appearing in Book One of our narrative, beginning with Troilus's vision of Criseyde at the temple.¹² Initially, the process of Troilus' falling in love is related mythographically, where the God of Love, angered by Troilus's laughter at the plight of lovers, strikes him with surprising suddenness: "He kidde anon his bowe nas naught broken; / For sodeynly he hitte hym atte fulle . . ." (1.208–9). After a short digression on pride and fortune, the moment is re-described, this time in the language of *perspectiva*:

And of hire look in him ther gan to quyken
 So gret desir and such affeccoun,
 That in his herte botme gan to stiken
 Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun.

.....

Lo, he that leet hymselfen so konnyng,
 And scorned hem that Loves peynes dryen,
 Was ful unwar that Love hadde his dwellynge
 Withinne the subtile stremes of hire yen. . . .
 (1.295–305)

The potent "subtile stremes" of Criseyde's eyes are of course the *species* of perspectivist optics and psychology. Chaucer's explicit referencing of this tradition in *Troilus and Criseyde* has been most notably discussed by Sarah Stanbury, who argues that the tradition of disagreement concerning the intromission and extramission of *species* provided a vehicle for Chaucer to attenuate notions of agency and identity in the psychological processes of desire, where "the experience of looking is instantly perceived to be an experience of being looked upon."¹³ Although Troilus is smitten both by Criseyde's glance as well as by her ambiguous "look in him" (referring to her glance as well as her visual figure), and is described as being "Right with hire look thorough-shoten and thorough-darted" (1.325), he is not entirely a passive victim of desire. Stanbury points out that Troilus' eye casts its own arrows: "And upon cas bifel that thorough a route / His eye percede, and so depe it wente, / Til on Criseyde it smot, and ther it stente" (1.271–73). Thus, according to Stanbury, "ocular iconography affords Chaucer a flexible tool for depicting intersubjectivity, the experience, central to the ethics of the Western love tradition, of loss of boundaries."¹⁴

Although Stanbury is correct when she observes that a reversal of agency occurs when Troilus's formulative gaze becomes the vehicle through which he himself is transfixed when his eyes fasten upon Criseyde, the purpose of this reversal is not to present a portrayal of the intersubjectivity of love, or a dissolution of boundaries or agency per se. The thematic concern behind Chaucer's use of perspectivist mechanics here has to do with the necessitarian implications of Troilus's "konnyng" or rational activity, and is part of a more general interest of the text in the problem of "fre choi[s]" versus "necessite," given explicit treatment in Troilus's long excursus on the subject in Book IV. Although I agree with Stanbury's insight that the text presents the possibility that a state of intersubjectivity occurs at the essential moment when Troilus's eyes meet Criseyde's, I will argue that this happens despite and in contrast to the operation of *species* described here. A closer look at the optical dynamics of the temple scene will show that they portray Troilus not as an individual for whom the notion of agency is made to evaporate, but as an individual whose own free agency is thrown into question by the determinist implications of the perspectivist view of the soul he exemplifies. This reversal occurs ironically by way of Troilus's attempt to exercise his power of free choice through his evaluation of visual impressions by a rationally-directed will, where this very assertion is shown to predicate a negation of choice or will. In addition, the visual dynamics of Troilus's enamorment are shown to delimit his cognition of Criseyde as a matter of representation, so that his reading of her is not only determined, but inadequate to its object. Troilus's apprehension of Criseyde therefore exhibits the same problems of agency and intelligibility we find expressed in fourteenth-century philosophical critiques of the *species* theory of perception.

In our first encounter with Troilus he is presented as an epistemological realist as well as an intellectualist who believes that truth derives from a substantial relation between term and object, and that his will and heart are firmly subject to his reason. This is expressed in the various arguments he imbeds in his jibes against those who become followers of love. Love is despised by Troilus particularly because it is unpredictable: "For the konnyngeste of yow, / That serveth most ententiflich and best, / Hym tit as often harm therof as prow" (1.331–3). It is a state that cannot be navigated by the reason in that it provides no foundation for perceptual or logical certitude: "In nouncerteyn ben alle youre observaunces, / But it a sely fewe pointes be" (1.337–8). It is not because lovers lack "konnyng" or are poor at logic that love is unpredictable, however, but that the terms of love are undependable. Its arguments are therefore "nouncerteyn" propositions that cannot guarantee the grace of the beloved. In a remarkable twist of the literary topos of the

religion of love, Chaucer has Troilus deploy the same theological critique against love's adherents that Aquinas and his followers used against Bonaventure and those who argued against the instrumental causality of the sacraments and for the voluntarist notion of covenantal (*sine qua non*) causality, or ascribed value.¹⁵ Troilus holds that the terms of love are unreliable because they depend on the will of the beloved, not on any real or necessary connection between the language of love and its object. He thus reproaches love from a Thomist perspective as an irrational religion, referring to love's adherents as "Goddess apes," who cannot know what their practices mean, who follow "Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle" (1.910–13). Action and language based upon good intentions are not sufficient for securing grace, and can only serve as a basis for fallible opinion:

But take this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe,
 Or elles doon, of good entencioun,
 Ful ofte thy lady wol it mysconstruwe,
 And deme it harm in hir oppynyoun. . . .
 (1.344–7)

Troilus also uses an economic metaphor to describe the plight of lovers: "Youre hire is quyt ayeyn, ye, God woot how!" (1.334). That Troilus mixes economic imagery here with that of sacramental theology is notable in view of William Courtenay's observation that scholastic objections to the notion of the ascribed value of the sacraments may have been influenced by traditional Church teaching on the just price of goods and services, which was based on the concept of inherent value (*bonitas intrinseca*).¹⁶ Surely Troilus's jibe would have had a special resonance in Chaucer's time: a period when rapid monetization combined with devaluating currencies, fluctuating market prices, and widespread counterfeiting destabilized values for goods, land and labor and caused deep anxieties across the European social fabric.¹⁷ Troilus's jibe, following his inadvertent allusion to sacramental instrumentality and his criticisms concerning opinion and certitude, identify him from the viewpoint of Chaucer's contemporaries as a traditionalist who, anachronistically speaking, looks back beyond the relativistic economics of the late fourteenth century to the metaphysical economics of intrinsic value espoused by Henry of Ghent and Thomas Aquinas. Like Aquinas, Troilus has a distinctly intellectualist conception of economic exchange, where valuation requires a mind performing an individual act of rational judgment. His quip, "Got woot how," could be taken not entirely idiomatically as a glance at both the voluntarist notion of reciprocity based on good will or intent,

and at the equally contingent but fully impersonal process of determining economic equivalencies based upon approximation described by Oresme and Buridan. In light of this and various other references in the text to currency and exchange, Troilus's conceptualization of Criseyde at the temple takes on clear monetary associations. R. A. Shoaf has observed that Criseyde functions for Troilus as "both word and coin on which Troilus imposes and stamps the meaning of his idealism."¹⁸ The figure of the coin functions as a perfect emblem for the *species*—in its sensible aspect as a medium impressed with an image of its source, and in its intelligible aspect as the measure of a value conveyed by this medium. Troilus's understanding of this value, his expectation concerning Criseyde's redeemability or truth, is based on his belief in the substantial connection between the coin and its value, between what he sees and what he knows, between sign and significance.

Troilus's belief in the objective truth potential of the mental word conditions his belief in the same potential for the spoken word. Thus throughout the text he is obsessed with oaths and verbal contracts. This linguistic traditionalism is in keeping with his status as knight—an estate customarily defined by an economics of reciprocal obligation in which land is exchanged for service, and where the medium of this exchange is the oath. Troilus's concern for truth in language is also an aspect of his intellectualism. For where will must necessarily follow reason, correctly conceived contractual obligations, including the conventions of language, are not arbitrary but formed to correspond to natural law. Troilus's belief in this law extends to his understanding of the rational structure of the universe, for he believes that perceptual rectitude must be followed by a certitude of grace.¹⁹ Thus he honors Fortune above all other gods: "Have I the nought honoured al my lyve, / As thow wel woost, above the goddes alle? (4.267–8)," and is uncomprehending when things go wrong for him and Fortune appears to be more willful than rational:

Than seyde he thus: "Fortune, alas the while!
 What have I don? What have I thus agylt?
 How myghtestow for rowthe me bygile?
 Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
 Shal thus Creiseyde away, for that thow wilt?"
 (4.260–4)

Troilus's arguments against love are meant to persuade his retinue of the need to subject the will to the control of the intellect. He believes he himself can avoid becoming a thrall to desire because desire should have no

power over reason. Thus he passes through the temple admiring the ladies of the town with no fear of temptation, classifying them in an evaluative inspection:

This Troilus, as he was wont to gide
 His yonge knyghtes, lad hem up and down
 In thilke large temple on every side,
 Byholding ay the ladies of the town,
 Now here, now there; for no devocioun
 Hadde he to non, to reven hym his reste,
 But gan to preise and lakken whom hym leste.
 (1.183–9)

The force of Troilus's rational will is associated with his martial prowess, and is manifested as an optical quality by which his personal agency is brought into relation with other forces, including societal forces. As Troilus guides his men through the crowd at the temple in military manner, he exerts a great deal of visual control over them as his eyes ferret out the intentions of their eyes:

And in his walk ful faste he gan to wayten
 If knyght or squyer of his compaignie
 Gan for to syke, or lete his eighen baiten
 On any womman that he koude espye.
 He wolde smyle and holden it folye,
 And seye hym thus, "God woot, she slepeth softe
 For love of the, whan thou turnest ful ofte!"
 (1.190–96)

Light-hearted as Troilus's japing is, it is also expressive of an impulse to maintain societal structures through visual control. Troilus is in effect instructing his "yonge knyghtes," in the exercise of this control as a kind of group discipline, essential for the cohesion of the group and its inter-allegiances, to Troilus's position in it as leader, and ultimately to its function on the field. This is supported by the optical imagery of the couplet that sums up Troilus's ridicule of lovers, "O veray fooles, nyce and blynde be ye! / Ther nys not oon kan war by other be" (1.202–3). What is at stake for Troilus in the loss of visual control brought on by love's uncertainty is a loss of rational order and control in general, synonymous for him with blindness, in which there can be neither leading nor warning. Leading and warning play an important part

in the narrative, particularly in references to warfare. The downward slide of the fortunes of Troy and the lovers both begins early in Book Four when Antenor is captured on a bad day for Troy on the field, because: "The folk of Troie hemselven so mysledden / That with the worse at nyght homward they fledden" (4.48–9). The Greeks accept Calchas into their camp because of their faith in his calculations, by which they hope to be guided and warned about the future: "In trust that he hath konnyng hem to rede / In every peril which that is to drede" (1.83–4, see also 4.73–7).

Troilus's rational visual behavior at the temple has an important spatial aspect. Troilus leads his knights "up and down / In thilke large temple on every side," in a manner that suggests that his passage through this space is something more than casual. Although it may be going too far to say it parallels the activity of Theseus's artisans in the *Knight's Tale*, who construct his theater east, west, south and north according to the principles of "ars-metrike," Troilus's behavior does suggest the same impulse to control nature through spatial regulation characteristic of perspectivist optics and geometry (CT I.1898). Spatial orientation is a significant feature of Troilus's apprehension of Criseyde, beginning with his initial sight of her: "'O mercy, God,' thoughte he, 'wher hastow woned . . . ?'" (1.276), and ending, after her departure, with his systematic visitation to the places where he has seen her and that serve to stimulate the image of her that still informs and organizes his memory:

Fro thennesforth he rideth up and down,
And every thyng com hym to remembraunce
As he rood forby places of the town
In which he whilom hadde al his plesaunce.
"Lo, yonder saugh ich last my lady daunce;
And in that temple, with hire eyen cleere,
Me kaughte first my righte lady dere."
(5.561–7)

Although Troilus's behavior characterizes him as an individual who believes that his universe is knowable and therefore rationally navigable, his understanding of the natural law by which this knowledge is secured is delimited by a mode of knowing dependent upon vision and quantification. Nature, however, turns out to be something more mysterious and complex than Troilus believes it to be. His arguments therefore prove of no use in defending him against the physical forces that overwhelm him at the moment he looks upon Criseyde, for as the narrator explains: "For may no

man fordon the lawe of kynde" (1.238). Troilus cannot defend against the magnitude or force of Criseyde's image as it strikes him because the laws of nature are more diverse and dynamic than he is able to grasp with his sense-constrained intellect. His vision therefore limits his understanding while at the same time serves as a medium through which these greater forces affect him. That nature's power and purpose, particularly when it takes the form of "loves hete, / Celestial, or elles love of kynde" (1.978–9), extends beyond the limits of human understanding is explicitly expressed later in the text in the narrator's address to Venus in the proem to Book III:

Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
 Of thynges, which that folk on wondren so,
 Whan they kan nought construe how it may jo
 She loveth hym, or whi he loveth here,
 As whi this fissh, and naught that, comth to were.
 (3.31–5)

No mortal can see the causes of things in all their individuating circumstances and diversity. As Chaucer remarks in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*: "God wot a thyng is nevere the lesse so / Thow every wyght ne may it nat yse / Bernard the monk ne say nat al, parde!" (F14–16). Criseyde's true force or value, her essence or *quidditas*, is something that Troilus cannot adequately know or measure by means of a likeness in the intellect based on an abstracted knowable perfection or ideal point of equality. It is incommensurable—in Oresme's words: an "irrational ratio."²⁰

As Troilus parades through the temple demonstrating his visual and rational control over the forces of nature, his vision and reason are thus shown to be the very means by which he is made subject to these forces. Chaucer underscores Troilus's ironic lack of choice in this reversal by emphasizing the sensory aspect of his perception of Criseyde over the abstractive portion of the process and by defining intellective representation in terms of internal sense impression. Troilus's perusal of the women of Troy is cast in terms that are more descriptive of the operation of the preliminary matching and sorting activity of the *virtus estimativa* than the deliberative processes of the intellect. Troilus's cognitive behavior at the temple in fact seems a clear illustration of the beginning of lovesickness as it is described by twelfth and thirteenth-century commentators on the *Viaticum*, who situate the cause of the malady in a malfunction of the estimative faculty when it encounters an unusually powerful *species*, ultimately leading to a disturbance of the imagination.²¹ Because the processes of the *virtus estimativa* are pre-rational, they

exercise a severely qualified notion of willing—one devoid of free choice. This lack of choice is apparent in the effect that Criseyde has on Troilus, for however much his praising and blaming "whom hym leste" seems to distinguish him from those forced to bend to love's devotions, it is by way of this behavior that Troilus ironically becomes transfixed and "astoned" by Criseyde's figure (1.274). This is expressed in the narrator's summation of the situation in the speech on fortune and desire that begins with: "O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!" (1.211). Despite his rational self-assurance, Troilus is unable to control the effects of his visual activity, and his attempted assertion of will through the application of his visual *intentio* leads to his being deprived of control over his vision so that: "Unnethes wiste he how to loke or wynke" (1.301). From an intellectualist point of view one could argue that Troilus's enamorment is not a consequence of reasoning but of its lack: he succumbs to a disturbance of the imagination as he reflects on Criseyde's image.²² From a voluntarist or covenantal perspective, however, this criticism begs the question of whether the intellect is capable of dependably or accurately conceiving a sense impression to begin with—the question of certitude—and whether there may be some greater yet indiscernible order operating through our faculties upon us.

Chaucer's use of light and darkness underscores the involuntary nature of Troilus's enamorment by making the defining moment of the process seem a physiological reflex effected by the stimulus of contrasting sensible intentions. The arresting and magnifying effects of contrasting intensities of light and color on the mind's estimation of a perceived object are a commonplace of perspectivist optical theory.²³ At the temple these effects are stimulated by Criseyde's own simultaneously bright and dark appearance, and by the difference between her dark dress and the bright "beste wise" (1.162) of the other ladies at the festival, who are described, like the blossoming natural world with which the scene is backgrounded, as "Ful wel arayed, both meeste, mene, and leste, / Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste" (167–8).

Following the perspectivist model of perception and cognition, the process of Troilus's apprehension of Criseyde proceeds from the sensitive faculties to the rational faculties by way of the imagination or *virtus imaginativa*. The figures that Chaucer uses to describe this stage of cognition, the writing surface or wax tablet and the mirror, are the same used by Boethius in the *De consolacione* to portray epistemological necessity and the Stoic view of the passive soul.²⁴ Troilus's heart, the medium onto which Criseyde's "fixe and depe impressioun" is inscribed, is the imagination or "brestez yē" (1.453), where sensible *species* are re-presented to the intellect for conversion

into intelligible *species*.²⁵ As Troilus returns from the temple to his chamber and begins to recollect his encounter with Criseyde, Chaucer describes this process using the image of the mirror:

. . . as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hire saugh a-temple, and al the wise
Right of hire look, and gan it newe avise.

Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde
In which he saugh al holly hire figure. . . .
(1.362–6)

Troilus now sees Criseyde's figure as "holly" because, as a representation reflected to the intellect, it is now intelligible or spiritual. The narrator's use of this term to describe the cognitive assimilation of the sensible to the intelligible should also be understood in light of Bacon's attempt to secure the notion of the "literal" truth of things by designating the connection between things and their concepts as both real and necessary through the notion of *species*, in so much as he held *species* to be exact likenesses of their generating objects. It is in this sense that Troilus can be said to read Criseyde's figure literally as it is translated from sensible *species* to intelligible *species* in his mind. In Book Three of the text the narrator again uses the term in this way to indicate his own exact rendering of the substance of his source in translation:

But sooth is, though I kan nat tellen al,
As kan myn auctour, of his excellence,
Yet have I seyd, and God toforn, and shal
In every thyng, al holly his sentence;
(3.1324–7)

Bacon argued at length the need for accurate translations of ancient texts for the advancement of spiritual and scientific understanding.²⁶ Chaucer's narrator gives a clear picture of what such a translation should entail in the proem to Book Two, where he declares his intention to relay his own translation of the lovers' story exactly, without interpretation or insertion of his own feeling ("That of no sentement I this endite" 2.13) or invention: "Wherefore I nyl have neither thank ne blame / Of al this werk" (2.15–16). The narrator indicates that he has no other choice in so much as the experience of love contained in his sources is unknown to him:

For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I.
 Ek though I speeke of love unfelyngly,
 No wondre is, for it nothyng of newe is;
 A blynd man kan nat juggen wel in hewis.
 (2.18–21)

Although he has no experience of the particulars of love, the narrator nonetheless believes himself able to read and translate the substance of his text objectively because he assumes its terms signify universal realities. Translation here is thus a kind of transcription—a literal rendering of mental terms indicated by the conventions of language that can be accomplished accurately even if the experiences these terms represent are not shared by the translator. This is so, the narrator explains, despite the fact that the customs of language are socially constructed and mutable over time, and notwithstanding that meaning differs in its particular expression from individual to individual:

Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is chaunge
 Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
 That hadden pris, now wonder nyce and straunge
 Us thinketh hem, and yet thei spake hem so,

 Ek scarsly ben ther in this place thre
 That have in love seid lik, and don, in al;
 For to thi purpos this may liken the,
 And the right nought; yet al is seid or schal;
 Ek som men grave in tree, some in ston wal . . .
 (2.22–47)

The problem with the narrator's claim is that, despite the possibility of illumination, one's cognition of a universal term can only be arrived at through experience of particulars—in view of the Aristotelian maxim that there is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses. The narrator's assertion of objectivity is thus depicted as hollow, for even though he may have no direct experience of love, he cannot help but "endite" meaning from the particular experience he does have. His translation is therefore something both smaller ("I kan nat tellen al") and larger than his text—it does not mirror it, either as a matter of quantity or natural likeness. His transmission of the text must involve a reading of it that requires, as his telling of the story progresses, a

substantial measure of interpretation, opinion, and “sentement,” colored by his own desire and will. Moreover, the narrator submits his rendering to the particular experience of his readers for their own interpretation and correction:

And if that ich, at Loves reverence,
Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwithal right as youreselven leste.

For myne wordes, heere and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow that felyng han in loves art,
And putte it al in youre discrecioun
To encesse or maken dymynucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow biseche.
(3.1328–36)

The narrator thus engages the problem of translation, and by extension knowledge, as a voluntarist *viator* who has undertaken a course and now can only trust to his own good intentions and imperfect capabilities to see the task through by doing the best he can: “But syn I have bigonne, / Myn auctour shal I folwen, if I konne” (2.48–9).

The problem of representation for Troilus also lies in bridging the gulf of uncertainty between sense and substance. But where the narrator attempts to traverse the darkness between the sensible and the intelligible by blindly doing the best he can as well as by appealing to the benevolence of his muses, Troilus collapses the problem by conflating object and concept. Although it is the role of the rational faculties to sort the phantasms of the imagination by separating the true from the false through dialectical reasoning and the application of memory, Troilus reads Criseyde’s figure as it strikes him, as sense represents substance without question or interpretation as it is rendered into a abstract *verbum* in his mind.²⁷ For Troilus, the universal and the particular appear wholly interchangeable as he conflates Criseyde with the value she signifies. Troilus therefore comes to require of Criseyde that she validate his conception of her as a universal truth through her constancy, which becomes the central issue of his experience of her. That Criseyde represents for Troilus a fixed value upon which his grasp of reality depends is borne out in his later description of her as a heavenly point upon which he has oriented himself in an otherwise dark and fearful universe:

O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
 With herte soor wel oughte I to biwaille
 That evere derk in torment, nyght by nyght,
 Toward my deth with wynd in steere I saille;
 For which the tenthe nyght, if that I faille
 The gydyng of thi bemes bright an houre,
 My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure.
 (5.638–44)

Criseyde is not only *a* light but *the* light—the basis of vision itself: "Syn she is queynt that wont was yow to lighte, / In veyn fro this forth have ich eyen tweye / Ifourmed, syn youre vertu is aweye" (4.313–15).

Troilus reconciles himself to his initial experience of Criseyde's *lumen* by identifying it as a rationally-directed force of which he had been hitherto unaware. He thus addresses the God of Love as the celestial intelligence that informs this radiating force ("Ye stonden in hir eighen myghtily, / As in a place unto youre vertu digne" 1.428–9), with whom he hopes he can come to equitable terms: "Wherfore, lord, if my service or I / May liken yow, so beth to me benigne" (1.430–31). Within the optical, religious, and economic context that has been established, Criseyde's figure becomes the surety on which Troilus's own new observances will rest as he vows fealty to the God of Love and commits himself to his (and Criseyde's) service. She becomes both the guarantor of grace and value and fixed unit of measurement in his mental economy.

Without her constancy to provide continuing evidence of this surety, however, Troilus's entire conceptual universe is in danger of collapse. For through his conflation of knowledge and vision Criseyde appears to him as both a universal truth and as the sign of this truth. This alignment of sign and significance must be continuously reinforced, nor will such evidence ever offer the enduring solace of bridging the gap between what Troilus sees and what he can be sure of. For the "truth of a thing" based in the particular can never be certain or at rest, since experiential evidence is never complete and is subject to contingencies of time and place.

Once Troilus has grasped what he perceives as Criseyde's intrinsic value, he moves from abstraction to the exercise of his intellectual faculties. Thus, his apprehension of her proceeds from definition to the formulation of demonstrative judgments or "second intentions" by way of deductive arguments in which this value is posited as a premise. These deliberations continue the economic imagery already established:

Imagenynge that travaille nor grame
 Ne myghte for so goodly oon be lorn
 As she, ne hym for his desir no shame,
 Al were it wist, but in pris and up-born
 Of alle lovers wel more than biforn,
 Thus argumented he in his gynnynge,
 Ful unavysed of his woo comynge.
 (1.372–8)

As Troilus calculates Criseyde's value in the labor market of love, his reasoning expresses his assumption that he can determine true equivalencies of worth based upon the notion of intrinsic value and the application of the logic of Aristotle's *scientia demonstrativa*. In so much as the question of certitude is at issue in these calculations, the question of how "scientific" Troilus's conclusions are should be considered with reference to Aristotle's categories of knowledge. Aristotle defines the term science (*episteme*) in at least two senses: loosely to mean any systematic, rational and teachable body of knowledge, including those he explicitly identifies as "craft" (*techne*) such as medicine and gymnastics; and more restrictively as only that knowledge which is either self-evident or demonstrable from necessary truths.²⁸ The understanding derived from such truths and First Principles, along with the grasp of these truths themselves, constitute for Aristotle wisdom, which he associates with study or *theoria* and defines in visual terms as a gazing on the whole truth of a thing in all its parts.²⁹ This intellectual gaze is for Aristotle, as for Aquinas, the condition for pure happiness or beatitude (*eudaimonia*).³⁰

Aristotle makes a clear distinction between scientific knowledge in this strict sense and prudence. Prudence differs from true science in that it deals with decisions and actions based upon knowledge which admits to the possibility of being otherwise.³¹ Prudence is uncertain and therefore not scientific because its conclusions are not based not upon reason alone, but upon experience—which is of particulars rather than universals.³² In addition, since it involves choice or decision-making, prudence engages the will.³³

From a scholastic perspective, Troilus's deliberations about Criseyde's relative value can be called scientific in the strict sense in so far as they are subalternate to *perspectiva*, as *perspectiva* itself was considered a subalternate science to geometry, from which it derived its premises.³⁴ Assuming that Troilus's decision to love Criseyde is premised on a universal quantity abstracted from her perceived figure, Troilus could be said to have come to a conclusion which could not have been otherwise, especially if we place him in the camp of those interpreters of Aristotle who deemed the will as necessarily acquiescing to

what the reason identifies as the good. The fact that Troilus is wholly motivated by his desire for this good ("Good goodly, to whom serve I and labour" 1.458, also 1.1034–6) and decides to act accordingly is in fact described as a matter of logical deduction:

N'yn him desir noon other fownes bredde,
 But argumentes to his conclusioun:
 That she of him wolde han compassioun,
 And he to ben hire man while he may dure.
 (1.465–8)

If Troilus's calculations concerning Criseyde's relative value have any pretense to the certitude of demonstration, however, the narrator makes clear that they fall short in that he is "unavysed of his woo comynge." Troilus's arguments are in error because they are based upon knowledge of an object acquired through the senses—knowledge that is limited by perspective and thus necessarily incomplete. Moreover, Troilus seems to have become aware of this possibility. For although he acts rationally in pursuing what he has identified as the good, it is only "Al were it wist" that he knows he would be judged a figure of praise rather than ridicule by his peers for becoming one of love's servants. Having been moved by the evidence of his senses to come full circle in his opinion on the merits of love, he is aware of the potential for error and the consequences of self-contradiction: "Repentyng hym that he hadde evere ijaped / Of Loves folk, lest fully the descente / Of scorn fille on hymself . . ." (1.318–20). Troilus's vision of Criseyde's form appears to have made him cognizant of the difficulty of demonstrating any truth with certitude in a universe where one's determination of what is true is necessarily subject to the limitations of sense and perspective. He consequently cannot trust that others will now see as he does. This awareness is immediately expressed in the rift that appears between Troilus's interior state and his outward demeanor as he begins to conceal his thoughts: "Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe, / And thoughte he wolde werken pryvely, / First to hiden his desir in muwe / From every wight yborn, al outrelly . . ." (1.379–82, also 1.311–14). Troilus justifies this behavior to himself by appeal to a proverb, a type of topical knowledge that Aristotle identifies with prudence and the experience of particulars: "Remembryng hym that love to wide yblowe / Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe" (1.384–5).³⁵ As Troilus becomes bound up with "loves craft," an activity that makes it even more apparent that he is now in the realm of knowledge which admits to the possibility of being otherwise, the visual dissembling by which he attempts to conceal his

desire and intentions transfers to the realm of words: "And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte / What for to speke, and what to holden inne; / And what to arten hire to love he soughte . . ." (1.386–9).

Although Troilus yet exhibits a thoroughly rational approach to his new purpose, he has been affected by the impact of Criseyde's figure on his universe. He is no longer the "proude Bayard [who] gynneth for to skippe / Out of the weye . . ." (1.218–19), but is aware that there are controlling forces in nature that are beyond his vision and understanding to which he must adhere. For in his vision of Criseyde he has suddenly had to consider the same implications concerning knowledge and self-determination that profoundly affected the late-medieval world-view in the wake of perspectivist scientific theory: that understanding dependent upon sense is necessarily partial and limited by point-of-view. And although he may attempt to skirt this limitation by conflating the universal and the particular in his conception of Criseyde, he now makes his commitment to the God of Love to love Criseyde, "with ful humble chere" (1.433).

Before he does so, however, Troilus expresses his anxiety about knowledge in a further process of reasoning that focuses on his interior state. This process involves a series of paradoxical questions on the problem of the nature of love (1.400–09). These questions lead to the central scholastic question of the ability of the reason to choose its own good. Unable to solve the problems presented to him by the contradictions of love, Troilus concludes his deliberations with an image expressive of a paralysis of reason and choice altogether:

O quike deth, O swete harm so queynte,
How may of the in me swich quantite,
But if that I consente that it be?

And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, iwis. Thus possed to and fro,
Al sterelees withinne a boot am I
Amydde the see, bitwixen wyndes two,
That in contrarie stonden evere mo.
(1.411–18)

We have already considered the metaphor of the steerless boat in the narrator's complaint and Troilus's allusion to Carybdis. However, here the boat is not merely lost and foundering in darkness but is arrested between two equal forces. The image of a movable object suspended between two equal causal

forces is used elsewhere by Chaucer, most prominently in the *Parliament of Fowles*, where the narrator of the poem suffers a paralysis of choice when confronted with two contradictory inscriptions at the entrance to the park of Nature, one describing it as a blissful place and the other describing it as harmful (127–37). The narrator compares himself to a piece of iron suspended between two magnets:

No wit hadde I, for errour, for to chese
To entre or flen, or me to save or lese.

Right as betwixen adamauntes two
Of even myght, a pece of yren set
Ne hat no myght to meve to ne fro—
(146–50)

Kathryn Lynch identifies the image of the magnets with the example, commonly used by voluntarist theorists to discredit the intellectualist explanation of rational choice, of Buridan's ass: an animal who starves to death when placed between two equally appealing bails of grass.³⁶ Like Troilus, the narrator of the *Parliament of Fowles* is described as being "astoned" when confronted by a paradox of reason, since both are presented as being wholly motivated to choose whatever the reason identifies as the good. This failure of will, which here we see derives from a complete dependency upon the reason for direction, becomes a characteristic feature of Troilus's behavior over the course of the narrative. Troilus's philosophical lyric thus casts light on the psychological processes that have preceded it, both sensitive and intellective, to indicate that his crisis of will is closely related to his perceptual rationality.

In his psychological paralysis Troilus could be viewed as an illustration for the critique leveled by Bishop Tempier against perspectivist and intellectualist accounts of the soul and their implicit delimitation of free choice. As a reader whose confidence in the intrinsic rational authority of the *verbum* causes him to require from his text the kind of mathematical certitude sought by Grosseteste and his followers for the scientific concept, Troilus reads Criseyde's figure literally, and so becomes the passive object of his text. This fixation on the literal is indicative of rational necessity (as opposed to interpretive latitude), but it also implies a failure of the *verbum* to sufficiently represent reality in deliberations that seek to determine the good. Troilus's new sense of powerlessness derives not only from the fact that he draws a necessary significance from Criseyde's visible figure, but that through it he can only partially grasp her true significance or *quidditas*. The impression

this figure makes in him, like that of a letter in wax, is at once a sign and an empty space. It is a *sophisma* he cannot solve. Without providing him with the security of a First Principle or certain truth on which he can base action, Troilus is unable to act. For despite the fact that he resolves to shift from science to art to this purpose, “to arten hire to love” through love’s craft, Troilus does not have the requisite will to undertake this action—he is too dependent upon reason. He therefore must look to Pandarus to supply the terms of this undertaking.

Chapter Three

Pandarus

In the bedchamber scene that takes place at the structural mid-point of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Pandarus, functioning in the narrative as go-between and “shaper” of the lovers’ affair, has in more ways than one staged this moment of consummation.¹ Having provided the set and its apparatus, and inventing a motivating scenario of false jealousy, Pandarus also controls what amounts to the dramatic lighting of the scene with his candle. Casting light on his own place in the event as well as illuminating the lovers (“And with that word he drow hym to the feere, / And took a light, and fond his contenance, / As for to looke upon an old romaunce” 3.978–80), he eventually removes his candle at the appropriate moment: “For aught I kan aspien, / This light, nor I, ne serven here of nought . . .” (3.1135–6). In his reflective pose by the fireplace Pandarus could be regarded as an emblem of the narrative artist, also a go-between, and even, perhaps, as the textual equivalent of an author-portrait. For like Pandarus Chaucer has reshaped his own “old romaunce” to a large extent through illumination—through a judicious manipulation of light and darkness—in order to remodel the material of his text to his own purposes.² In so much as Pandarus’s candle illuminates his own place in the scene as well the lovers, the moment also provides a striking comment on the mutuality of artist and text. For if Troilus’s reading practices are expressive of a totalizing singularity of vision that prevents him from exercising any choice or interpretive latitude in his understanding, Pandarus’s are so performatively active that reading and “enditing” appear to be inseparable.

Pandarus’s perceptual acts are characterized by this performative mobility because light and reason to him are not vehicles through which universal verities illuminate the mind, but instruments for measuring proximate truths about things in their interrelations. For Pandarus the imagination does not, as it does for Troilus, function primarily as a screen onto which objects are projected through the lens of a gazing eye to be “wholly” translated into fixed

concepts. Rather it is a kind of interior stage upon which he is able to consider and experiment with pluralities of possibility, and from which he can then make and implement choices. Pandarus is himself a capable actor who often plays a role in own his schemes in order to mold the vision of others: "From every wight as fer as is the cloude / He was, so wel dissimilen he koude" (3.433–4). For Pandarus, the imagination not only reflects the world, but the world can be shaped to reflect the imagination.

Pandarus's perceptual and cognitive activities are therefore cast in the text as a kind of playing. "For the have I bigonne a gamen pleye," Pandarus tells Troilus, informing him that he has put into motion a plan to secure Criseyde's trust (3.250). They take place in a state of mind "Bitwixen game and ernest" (3.254), a phrase that expresses, in distinction to Troilus's overwrought earnestness, Pandarus's assessment of his own amatory difficulties as he and Criseyde make light of them:

"Tel us youre joly wo and youre penaunce.
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce?"

"By God," quod he, "I hoppe alway byhynde!
And she to laughe, it thoughte hire herte brest.
Quod Pandarus, "Loke alwey that ye fynde
Game in myn hood. . . ."
(2.1105–10)

Pandarus thus functions as a go-between in more than one sense. For he not only mediates the love affair between Troilus and Criseyde on a social level, he acts as an intermediary between the real and the imaginary in a way that provides a working space within which the gulf between object and concept can be explored and inhabited. As he places himself at Troilus's disposal, the tools Pandarus brings to this space become the means by which Troilus is enabled to act on his decision to "arten" Criseyde to love. As Pandarus describes his role in the endeavor to Troilus: "for the am I bicomen . . . swich a meene / As maken wommen unto men to comen; / Al sey I nought, thow wost wel what I meene" (3.253–6).

The play on the word "meene," which indicates in its first use both a means and an intermediary, and in its second the act of signifying, has various resonances—logical, mathematical, economic, and scientific—that identify Pandarus as the instrument of a perceptual and epistemological relativism typical of late fourteenth-century natural philosophy.³ For Pandarus's conceptualizing activities on Troilus's behalf are characterized not by

eidetic representation but by *process* ("I shal thi proces set in swych a kynde, / And God tofor, that it shal the suffice" 3.334–5), where the "meene" term signifies a mutable but calculable relation rather than a timeless and absolute equality.⁴ Pandarus's lore is expressive of a calculatory mode of thinking that approached problems like that of the narrator's implied *sophisma* geometrically, where complex objects with difform qualities could be quantified and "solved" within a given range of probability to a mean value. Despite the impetus in the fourteenth century to regard calculation in the natural sciences as a form of *scientia demonstrativa*, these formulations, sometimes called *imaginationes*, were admittedly achieved through the use of fictions and pretenses, as Oresme indicates: "Etsi nichil sunt puncta indivisibilia aut linee, tamen oportet ea mathematice fingere pro rerum mensuris et earum proportionibus cognoscendis" ["Although indivisible points, or lines, are non-existent, still it is necessary to feign them mathematically for the measures of things and for the understanding of their ratios"].⁵ Certainly in a strict sense the calculation of value along geometric latitudes failed the test of demonstrative certitude, as Olivi states: "Et ideo varios gradus et paucam certitudinem, multumque ambiguitatis iuxta modum opinabilium in se includit, quamvis quedam plus et quedam minus" ["And such a latitude will therefore contain various degrees and little certainty, and much ambiguity attached to the estimates, with some greater and some less"].⁶

This conceptual relativism is clearly at work in Pandarus's economic dealings, which contrast sharply with Troilus's monetary realism. Unlike Troilus, Pandarus takes nothing at face value. His transactions are expressive of an economics where the value of a thing is neither intrinsic nor purely covenantal, but determined from ratios calculated from relations of contingent and intensible external conditions such as need and usefulness. For Pandarus, estimations of worth are altered by circumstance: "upon newe cas lith newe avys" (4.416). Moreover, everything has its price: all things in the physical universe can be quantified and measured against one another. He therefore suggests that Troilus simply "chaungen" Criseyde for another as circumstances change at the news of her impending departure:

And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
 As ever she was, shal I fynde in som route—
 Yee, on or two, withouten any doute.
 Forthi be glad, myn owen deere brother!
 If she be lost, we shal recovere an other.
 (4.402–6)

Criseyde is a commodity or coin that Pandarus would trade for any number of others of equal or greater value. This value is not a substance common to each, but an estimated "meene" of separate accidental qualities in separate individuals:

What! God forbede alwey that ech plesaunce
 In o thyng were and in non other wight!
 If oon kan synge, an other kan wel daunce;
 If this be goodly, she is glad and light;
 And this is fair, and that kan good aright.
 Ech for his vertu holden is for deere,
 Both heroner and faucoun for ryvere.
 (4.407–13)

Chaucer illustrates this principle in an allusion to the ancient painter Zeuxis of Heraclea ("Zanzis" 4.414), known for his artistic naturalism (birds were said to have pecked at his painted fruit), as well as his portraiture of women. In the second book of his *De inventione* Cicero relates how, in order to paint a idealized portrait of Helen as embodiment of feminine beauty, Zeuxis assembled a group of women as models: "Neque enim putavit omnia, quae quaereret ad venustatem, uno se in corpore reperire posse ideo quod nihil simplici in genere omnibus ex partibus perfectum natura expolivit" ["because he did not think all the qualities which he sought to combine in a portrayal of beauty could be found in one person, because in no single case has Nature made anything perfect and finished in every part"].⁷ Zeuxis's conceptualization of Helen, unlike Troilus's conceptualization of Criseyde, is not the abstract representation of a concrete universal, but an assemblage of particular qualities into a composite form—in rhetorical terms, an *in-ventione*. Like Zeuxis, Pandarus's own "paynted proces," as Criseyde describes it (2.424), is an art in which nature is in the details, whose value must be surmised from relations of accidents viewed in perspective.

As Pandarus's economics have to do with spatial perspective, they also take into consideration temporal limitation: they are a way of adapting to the mutability and flux of the physical universe. Thus, in so much as the variables measured are accidental and dependent on the senses, Pandarus holds that the value of a thing fades without sustained perceptual reinforcement:

For also seur as day comth after nyght,
 The newe love, labour, or oother wo,

Or elles selde seyng of a wight,
 Don olde affeccions alle over-go
 (4.421–4).

Despite Pandarus's advice, Troilus is unwilling to trade Criseyde in for a "fresshly newe" model (4.457). In his estimation her value is intrinsic, substantial, constant, and—in so much as he conceives her as having a worth above all others—to be banked rather than circulated. He therefore dismisses Pandarus's accounting as mere opinion having to do with the particular and changeable:

And ther thou seist, thou shalt as faire fynde
 As she, lat be; make no comparisoun
 To creature yformed here by kynde!
 O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
 I wol not ben of thyn opynyoun. . . .
 (4.449–53)

Moreover, Troilus is bound by rational necessity not to betray the idea of the good that Criseyde represents for him: "It lith nat in my power, leewe brother; / And though I myghte, I wolde not do so" (4.458–9). Pandarus is governed by no such necessity. Although he is fond of making references to the mutability of nature by citing the motions of fortune, he is not constrained by any sense of providence or rational force from taking action to alter circumstance. For Pandarus, as for Oresme and Buridan, fortune's fair is a market of competing interests that ultimately serve an equalizing process beyond the ken of human understanding and intent, whose equality is the product of a willed inequality. Pandarus's role in this process is not to seek some abstract idea of the good, but to pursue what he believes are his own personal interests, even if this pursuit violates legal and civic interests.⁸ He thus advises Troilus to break his "fadres graunt" and take Criseyde by force ("Devyne nat in resoun ay so depe / Ne preciously, but help thiself anon. / Bet is that othere than thiselven wepe" 4.589–91), despite Troilus's understanding that "she is chaunged for the townes goode" (4.553).

Pandarus pursues his interests in part by cultivating the trust of others. For although he employs a mathematics of probability in the determination of the "meene," the fruit of his calculations requires an investment of belief. Like a good financial broker, however, he is able to make a profit on his suppositions by convincing others to assume certain risks as he plays the numbers, presumably on their behalf—although he does not ever really "know"

their investments will show a return. His game therefore calls for an initial gesture of surety, a gauge of trust—underscored by the fact that Pandarus refers to himself as a "borough," the security or deposit on a loan—making him Troilus's *retainer* in more ways than one (1,1038, 2.134). The fact that the whole endeavor, like Pandarus's stagecraft, is built upon gaming and role-playing is supported by additional uses of the term in the text indicating pretense: "Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe / Of other siknesse"; "Hire nedede no teris for to borwe" (1.488–9; 5.726).⁹

For Pandarus, language itself is a game of averages whose instruments are devices for estimating relative latitudes of value in a fluid and continuous medium. It is a scheme of contexts and pretexts—of supposition, imposition, and certainly proposition—where significance is discovered not in definition, but in the inexact and changeable relations between things. It is for this reason that Pandarus is willing to describe but not put a name to his role as a procurer of women ("Al sey I nought"). Troilus, in contrast, with his penchant for the metaphysical, has no trouble parsing terms for Pandarus's actions:

And this that thow doost, calle it gentillesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist.
Depart it so, for wyde-where is wist
How that ther is diversite requered
Bytwixen thynges like, as I have lered.
(3.402–6)

Meaning for Pandarus is proportional, where language indicates difference as much as likeness. Its terms, therefore, can never fully portray their objects, for they necessarily obscure as much as they convey. Thus the dialogs in which Pandarus participates often resemble elaborate games of hide-and-seek, and he employs words as often to "dissimulen" as not. The written correspondence that Pandarus elicits and transmits between the lovers, who both protest that writing is difficult for them, is generally met with perplexity and bafflement on its face. Criseyde, responding to Pandarus's trolling inquiry as to whether she finds Troilus's first letter to her acceptable, can only say, and with some generosity, that he appears to be familiar with the etiquette of letter-writing: "So I trowe. / Aquite hym wel, for Goddes love" (2.1199–1200).¹⁰ Of course Troilus has followed Pandarus's advice concerning what to say in the letter, or rather what not to say. For Pandarus has advised him not to be overly formal or sentimental, taking care also to put the damper on Troilus's proclivity for demonstration:

Towchyng thi lettre, thou art wys ynough.
 I woot thow nyht it dygneliche endite,
 As make it with thise argumentes tough;
 Ne scryvenyssh or craftyly thow it write;
 Biblotte it with thi teris ek a lite;
 And if thow write a goodly word al softe,
 Though it be good, reherce it nought to ofte.
 (2. 1023–9)

Form, Pandarus tells him, should reflect content: “hold of thi matere / The forme alwey, and do that it be lik” (2.1039–40). Likeness here, however, is primarily achieved through a proper relation among terms, as Pandarus illustrates when he again employs an allusion to painting: “For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk / With asses feet, and hedde it as an ape, / It cordeth naught . . .” (2.1041–3). This is because for Pandarus content *is* form, where form is a relation of accidents defined by function. His literary advice is therefore aimed at finding and deploying language in the right quantities and proportions in order to best persuade. Troilus, ashamed of his rhetorical naïveté (“Lest of myn innocence I seyde amys” 2.1048), follows this advice so literally that his letter, paraphrased by the narrator, comes off as a purely *pro forma* exemplar of the genre and a catalog of amatory clichés (2.1065–1084).

Troilus does not view his letter merely as a proper arrangement of relationships or a vehicle of persuasion, however. He sees it as means for representing himself to Criseyde as a discrete whole or universal, much as Criseyde’s figure does for him. His impressing of the letter with his seal, as his own heart has been impressed with her image, underscores this, as well as the importance he places on Criseyde’s seeing it—as if reading were primarily a matter of gazing upon an object:

And with his salte teris gan he bathe
 The ruby in his signet, and it sette
 Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe.
 Therwith a thousand tymes er he lette
 He kiste tho the lettre that he shette,
 And seyde, “Lettre, a blisful destine
 Thee shapyn is: my lady shal thee see!”
 (2.1086–92)

Criseyde finds writing even more difficult than Troilus: “I never dide a thing with more peyne / Than writen this, to which ye me constreynre”

(2.1231–2). At a loss at what to say in her reply to Troilus ("And eek I noot what I sholde to hym seye" 2.1206), she follows Pandarus's advice concerning the content: "Yet at the leeste thonketh him, I preye, / Of his good wille, and doth him nat to deye" (2.1208–9). Like Troilus, Criseyde follows Pandarus's advice closely, adding only that, "as his suster, hym to plesse, / She wolde fayn" (2.1224–5). Yet Troilus is bewildered by the letter, whose words make his heart alternately "glade and quake," because, the narrator tells us: "Al covered she the wordes under sheld" (2.1321, 1327). For, plain as the substance of her message appears, its meaning is dependent upon context, as the ambiguity of the word "fayn" indicates. Criseyde's letter thus also functions as an object of uncertainty, so that Troilus has to rely on Pandarus to supply him with a sense of its general significance: "what for hope and Pandarus byheste, / His grete wo foryede he at the leste" (2.1329–30).

Although the letters Pandarus elicits from the lovers may be enigmatic by default, they do provide a ground for interpretation by mediating the space between object and concept as well as between the communicants. They do this in part by substituting for an absence, as Pandarus himself does in his role as mailman: "He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent; / He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent" (3.487–8). Pandarus provides for the possibility of meaning and communication by serving as a figure of shared trust in his role as a "borough" and place-holder—he is, after all, a mutual friend. He is a means of becoming familiar without direct contact. This familiarity becomes habituation by the repetition of his passing "to and fro," and serves as an illustration for a type of knowledge that is built up from the confidence that repeated association elicits. It is a way of arriving at a knowledge of Hercules without ever having seen Hercules. For, although it is based in sense perception, it depends not upon formal representation but on an estimation of cause and value derived from an accrual of percepts of entities associated with Hercules. It thus provides for the development of a matrix of significance where object and meaning do not stand in a one-to-one relationship, but are linked by a complex set of perceptions and calculations concerning causal processes. Pandarus's linguistic art is therefore a way of arriving at a practical ratio of belief about things as we come to know them in their relations to one another, which is how he defines truth to Troilus:

And witteth wel that bothe two ben vices:
 Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve.
 But wel I woot, the mene of it no vice is,
 For to trusten som wight is a preve
 Of trouthe. . . .
 (1.687–91)

Pandarus is able to make the unfamiliar familiar in part by playing to his audience. We see this in his summary account to Criseyde in Book Two of his encounter with Troilus in Book One, where he makes subtle alterations to events in order to cast Troilus in a better light in Criseyde's eyes (1.547–1064, 2.505–78). Pandarus begins by downplaying Troilus's outward expressions of despair, and by inventing situations where Troilus appears to be attempting to put a good face on things. These include their leaping and throwing of javelins in a palace courtyard, and Troilus's attempt to hide his pain by putting on, "as fresshe a countenaunce / As though he sholde have led the newe daunce," when Pandarus comes on him unawares groaning in his chamber (2.512–13, 2.552–3). Pandarus also adds that Troilus swears him to secrecy and that this secrecy is the chief cause of Troilus's suffering ("This is the werste, I dar me nat bywreyen" 2.537), leaving out Troilus's principal fear that Criseyde will be angry upon hearing of his distress from Pandarus ("Lest she be wroth—this drede I moost" 1.1019). Most of all, Pandarus places an emphasis on, and makes subtle changes to, Troilus's confession to the God of Love, a confession that Pandarus draws out of him in the first place. In the narrator's account in Book One, Troilus confesses having erred in his speech against Love in three lines, vowing never to do so again: "Quod Troilus, 'A! lord! I me consente, / And prey to the my japes thow foryive," / And I shal nevere more whyle I live'" (1.936–7). In Pandarus's account, Troilus's confession is extended to twenty quoted lines before Troilus hangs his head and continues speaking too softly for Pandarus to hear. In it, Troilus repents not for his words but for sinning in his will or intentions, "Al have I been rebell in myn entente; / Now, *mea culpa*, lord, I me repente!" (2.524–5). The change is calculated to appeal to Criseyde's focus on intentionality and interiority, and her voluntarist sensibility in general. Pandarus also adds language to Troilus's confession in order to portray him as someone who, like Criseyde, has a purely covenantal idea of the universe:

O god, that at thi disposicioun
 Ledest the fyn by juste purveiaunce
 Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
 Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce
 As liketh the, but from disesperaunce,
 That may my goost departe away fro the,
 Thow be my sheld, for thi benignite.
 (2.526–32)

Pandarus omits the militant language of an earlier "conceyte"—designed to appeal to Troilus—that Troilus will now be the "beste post" of the God of Love, "and moost his foos to greve" (1.996, 1.1000–01), and substitutes an affective sensibility on Troilus's part: "Lord! have routhe upon my peyne" (2.523). Pandarus also expresses his own pity for Troilus, in which he hopes to involve Criseyde: "But for to save his lif, and elles nought, / And to noon harm of yow, thus am I dryven; / And for the love of God that us hath wrought" (2.575–7).

Pandarus's rhetorical talents often seem the practical application of principles derived from perspectivist optics. This includes his interpretive skill: "And Pandarus gan him the lettre take, / And seyde, 'Parde, God hath holpen us! / Have here a light, and loke on al this blake'" (2.1318–20). The light Pandarus is concerned with is not the celestial *lux* or uncreated light of truth sought by Troilus, however, but an earthly means of regulating perception. Pandarus reads his texts, as he reads everything, as visual evidence of the possible and probable, not the certain. The meaning he formulates, underscored by his profuse use of proverbs, corresponds to those categories of natural inductive understanding that Aristotle identifies with the accumulated experiences and habits of age and contrasts with the knowledge of demonstration.¹¹

Pandarus's experiential eye aids him in his rhetorical undertakings. In the dialog between Pandarus and Troilus that takes up the second half of Book One, Pandarus is able to badger from Troilus the name of his niece only after Troilus, who cannot so well "dissimilen" with Pandarus as he can with his retinue, gives away his secret with a blush: "For he was hit, and wax al reed for shame. / 'A ha!' quod Pandare; 'Here bygynneth game'" (1.322, 867–8). The difference between Pandarus's optical clearsightedness and Troilus's tendency to be blinded by his idea of truth is nowhere more apparent than in the passage in Book Five which describes their vigil on the walls of Troy as they gaze into the distance looking for Criseyde to keep her promise to return from the Greek encampment. Described again as vacillating "bitwixen hope and drede" (5.1207), Troilus's desire for visual confirmation of his "truth" is so acute that he misreads what he sees, until Pandarus is obliged to correct him:

"Have here my trouthe, I see hire! Yond she is!
 Heve up thyn eyen, man! Maystow nat se?"
 Pandare answerde, "Nay, so mote I the!
 Al wrong, by God! What saistow, man? Where arte?
 That I se yond nys but a fare-cart."
 (5.1158–62)

Pandarus's knowledge of scientific calculation aids him in planning and forecasting. The overall process by which he schemes to move Criseyde to love Troilus is described, borrowing from the poetics of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, in the language of architectural geometry:

For everi wight that hath a hous to founde
 Ne renneth naught the werk for to bygynne
 With rakel hond, but he wol bide a stounde,
 And sende his hertes line out fro withinne
 Aldirfirst his purpose for to wyne.
 (1.1065–9)

In his plan for the rendezvous between Troilus and Criseyde in his bedchamber, Pandarus employs both *perspectiva* and *astrologia* to calculate the event for the darkest possible time—at midnight on the night of a new moon, when the stars will be obscured by a “smoky reyn”—in order to “blynd” the world to the meeting (3.528–30, 550, 602, 628).

The perspectivist principle Pandarus knows best, however, is the effect of contrast: “Eke whit by blak, by shame ek worthinesse, / Ech set by other, more for other semeth” (1.642–3).¹² He employs it as a tool of magnification and diminishment in order to refract and deflect *species* before impressing them upon the cognitive faculties of others: “And were it wist that I, through myn engyn, / Hadde in my nece yput this fantasie . . .” (3.274–5). Pandarus often accomplishes this rhetorically by using hyperbole as a magnifying lens to damn one individual in order to make another seem more worthy, as in the scenario he invents in order to first bring Troilus and Criseyde together at the home of Deiphebus, and inflate Troilus's worth in her eyes (2.1415–91). The tactic, however, can have pernicious consequences—particularly when a distorted percept is multiplied further by rumor. In this case it threatens to set into motion an internecine war between the house of Priam and that of Poliphete, whom Pandarus claims is trying to break Hector's pledge to protect Criseyde:

He rong hem out a proces lik a belle
 Upon hire foo that highte Poliphete,
 So heynous that men myghten on it spete.

Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other,
 And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien:
 “Anhonged be swich oon, were he my brother!

And so he shal, for it ne may nought varien!"
(2.1615–21)

As Poliphete's perfidity is amplified, so is Troilus's virtue, while Pandarus steps in to play a bit part in the drama he has set into motion:

After compleynt, hym gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet whan som wight hath bygonne
To preise a man, and up with pris him reise
A thousand fold yet heigher than the sonne:
"He is, he kan, that fewe lordes konne."
And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He not forgat hire preisyng to conferme.
(2.1583–9)

Within the wider framework of the narrative, the effects of misperception and misvaluation created or enhanced by certain uses of language pose dangers to the wider social fabric, as the presence of Helen in the Deiphebus episode forebodes. For the plan to rescue Criseyde from Poliphete by Troilus and his brothers is suggestive of the rescue of Helen by the Greeks, where the significance of Helen's conquest by Paris has been overestimated in the minds of the Greeks through the same kind of exponential multiplication of forces we see set into motion by Pandarus's machinations on Troilus's behalf. A parallel to the eventual result of this process is described in the *House of Fame*, where Chaucer concludes his elaborate description of Rumor as a whirling house, whose sounds are ever amplified, with the image of a burning city:

Thus north and south
Wente every tydyng fro mouth to mouth,
And that encresing ever moo,
As fyr ys wond to quyke and goo
From a sparke spronge amys,
Til al a cite brent up ys.
(2075–80)

Like Troilus, Pandarus has an overarching visual orientation to nature that delimits his understanding. For if Pandarus is free of the confusion and paralysis that Troilus is subject to in his need for certitude, Pandarus's relativistic mode of conceptualizing brings its own set of problems and liabilities. With no idea of the good to guide him, his practice of basing all action on

particular interest sets off chains of events that threaten the social order in which he dwells. The problems of the Trojans in general are defined in the narrative as the result of transactions motivated wholly by personal advantage, often conceived as a visual or perspectival advantage. Helen, of course, is stolen from the Greeks by Paris (4.546–7). More importantly, however, she is an item of exchange given as a bribe to Paris from Venus that freights the visual evaluation of his judgment of the three goddesses.¹³ Ultimately, the war is also a punishment levied upon Troy by the gods who had built the city for King Laomedon and whom he subsequently short-changed: “Bycause he nolde payen hem here hire, / The town of Troie shal ben set on-fire” (4.125–6).

From an Aristotelian perspective, Pandarus’s perception of reality may fall short even of the criteria for prudence, and could be placed in the category of mere cleverness: “There is a capacity, called cleverness, which is such as to be able to do the actions that tend to promote whatever goal is assumed and to attain them.”¹⁴ For prudence’s “third eye” is dependent not only upon cleverness but upon what Aristotle terms “natural virtue”:

Prudence is not cleverness, though it requires this capacity. [Prudence] this eye of the soul, requires virtue in order to reach its fully developed state, as we have said and as is clear. . . . For each of us seems to possess his type of character to some extent by nature; for in fact we are just, brave, prone to temperance, or have another feature, immediately from birth.¹⁵

Although Pandarus’s mediation of perception certainly has its uses, it ultimately fails to provide the kind of certitude that Troilus requires of Criseyde. For Troilus’s need regarding Criseyde’s truth excels the requirements not only of cleverness, but, as we have mentioned, prudence as well.

In his grasp of the operations of nature, Pandarus draws on the mechanical principles of perspectivist optics without regard for the meta-physical foundations of that science. In applying these principles to his reading of the world around him he is therefore not bound by the same considerations of rational necessity that constrain Troilus. Reason, for Pandarus, is a tool of the will. Lacking any universal idea of the good, however, and completely delimited by particular perspective, Pandarus’s activities are uninformed by any considerations beyond their immediate purpose. Moreover, while his actions are free, they are also necessarily arbitrary—it is never clear just what Pandarus’s motives are or what good constitutes his self-interest. Hence he must himself “borwe” on the motives of others, especially

Troilus. In the final analysis, therefore, Pandarus appears just as unmoored upon the darkness of the real as does Troilus, just as unable to effect his will upon it, as Criseyde is lost to them both and he succumbs to silence (5.1743).

Troilus and Pandarus represent in different ways the limitations of formulations of nature based wholly upon vision. From the view of late-medieval critiques of perspectivist psychology, these limitations hinge on the inability of the *species* theory to adequately account for problems of representation and causality in explaining the relation between the sensible and the intelligible. Troilus errs in his conceptualization of Criseyde in that he takes the particular for the universal, where concept and object cannot be distinguished from one another. Pandarus conceives Criseyde through a relation of causes only partially understood, whose significance—which does not derive from the object itself—he must impose or borrow. Troilus exemplifies an intellect uninformed by will; Pandarus a will unilluminated by First Principles. Neither is able to both conceive and act upon an idea of the Good without the assistance of the other.

Chapter Four

Criseyde

Criseyde represents a way of conceptualizing the world that is strikingly different from the optically-oriented approaches to knowledge typified by Troilus and Pandarus. For her perceptual activity reflects the psychology of voluntarism and the epistemological notion of intuitive cognition, which together offered an alternative approach to the operations of the soul to that presented by the science of *perspectiva*. For Criseyde, the gulf between the self and the real is bridged not through representation or calculation, but by gestures of will combined with direct, unmediated experience. These gestures take their value not from their correspondence to any substantial form or mean, but in their conformity to a concept of absolute will understood as a matter of trust in a contingent natural order. Criseyde's link to this greater will is her own will, apprehended intuitively and expressed in the notion of *facienti quod in se est*. Her voluntarism is in keeping with her status as widow in that she is one who, through loss, has had to conform her individual will to a power ultimately beyond her understanding. It is also demonstrated in the subjectivity she applies in situations of exchange that engages a notion of equalization based upon mutual good will.

Criseyde's perceptual and cognitive activity must therefore take into its ken her own interior states as well as the intent of others, or the "good entencioun" that is her chief concern and serves for her as the basis for knowledge, communication, and action. This is also expressed in her frequent use of the term "fyn" to indicate significance. For if for Pandarus meaning is synonymous with means, for Criseyde it resides in ends, where the outcome desired serves as final cause by which the signifying transaction derives its value. Significance for Criseyde therefore dwells neither in the letter nor in the form signified by the letter, but in the intention. This is emblemized in her last words to Troilus, which end her last letter to him, where in her apology for her briefness and the fact that, "Ne nevere yet ne koude I wel endite"

(5.1628), Criseyde substitutes a gesture of will for the letter and its impress as the measure of substance in signification: "Th'entente is al, and nat the lettres space" (5.1630). Recalling the narrator's sophismatic "A," the sentence encapsulates the difference between a voluntaristic understanding of truth and scientific approaches based upon quantification and literal representation. Carrying the point a bit further, Criseyde ends the letter with her own singular "lettre," not an "A" but a "C" ("La vostre C." 5.1631), reminding us that meaning is something we impose.

Although Criseyde values intention over representation in the apprehension of truth, she is not unfamiliar with purely rational applications of language, including dialectic and mathematics. This intellectual capability is an important aspect of her voluntarism. For while voluntarist epistemology developed within the tradition of medieval faculty psychology, it identified these faculties not as compartmentalized accidents of the soul, but as a unity of powers consubstantial with the soul.¹ This unity was reflective of Augustine's teaching that the human soul is created in God's image—the image of the Trinity—mirrored in the attributes of *memorativa*, *intellectus*, and *voluntas*.² "Doing what is in one" therefore involves not only willing, but all one's psychological capacities acting in unison—with the will, however, clearly serving as arbiter.

The intellectual aspect of this unity in Criseyde's portrayal is succinctly illustrated in an exchange between Criseyde and Pandarus in Book Three. Perplexed at how to respond to Pandarus's ploy to get her to receive Troilus into her bedchamber, Criseyde characterizes her situation with a *terminus technicus* of the late medieval mathematical curriculum to indicate that she is at a rational standstill: "But whether that ye dwelle or for hym go, / I am, til God me better mynde sende, / At dulcarnoun, right at my wittes ende" (3.929–31). The term "dulcarnoun" specifically referred to Euclid's diagrammatic exposition of his forty-seventh proposition, the Pythagorean Theorem (*Elements* I.47), regarded as seminal to the measuring sciences but also notoriously difficult to demonstrate.³ Criseyde not only knows her Euclid, but seems to know it better than does Pandarus. For Pandarus mistakenly elides this term with one referring to another proposition, Euclid's theorem on the isosceles triangle (*Elements* I.5)—also regarded as difficult to construct:

Quod Pandarus, "Yee, nece, wol ye here?
 Dulcarnoun called is 'flemynge of wrecches':
 It semeth hard, for wrecches wol nought lere,
 For verray slouthe or other wilfull tecches;
 This seyde by hem that be nought worth two fecches;

But ye ben wis, and that we han on honde
 Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde."
 (3.932–8)

In light of Pandarus's calculatory associations, it is interesting that the determination of the proposition he cites requires, unlike the true dulcarnon, an understanding of irrational numbers.⁴ It is thus, characteristically, the mathematics of incommensurables that Pandarus indicates only "semeth hard," but is not so difficult for those who are not too lazy or willful to learn. Despite what Pandarus says of her, however, Criseyde is also willful—at least in so far as she is unwilling to pretend to knowledge she does not have. But she is not irrational: she considers Pandarus's arguments, designed to overwhelm her with emotional concern that Troilus may do himself harm, with a determination to solicit the "bette mynde" of divine justification in order to make an informed decision. Criseyde is thus "wis," but not in the way Pandarus means. For she finally assents to Pandarus's request not solely out of pity for Troilus, nor because she accepts the implications of Pandarus's calculatory logic as a matter of scientific estimation, but through an act of judgment based upon an attitude of reasonableness informed by a movement of the will as well as logic.⁵ Hoping that her good intentions will merit her the grace of inspired wisdom ("And em, iwis, fayn wolde I don the beste, / If that ich hadde grace to do so" 3.927–8), Criseyde does the best she is able as she entrusts herself to these intentions: "that she did hym as thanne a grace, / Considered alle thynges as they stode, / No wonder is, syn she did al for goode" (3.922–4). Criseyde's approach to being at "wittes ende" is therefore not, like Troilus, to grow "astoned" and verge on despair. Instead she exhibits a perceptual and cognitive wholeness, which allows her to move beyond the limitations of knowing what to do purely as a matter of *scientia* by admitting what she doesn't know and by trusting in the capacity of divine grace to perfect and guide her will as she does what is within her.

If for Criseyde reason is a necessary condition for right action, she is also familiar with the limitations of reason and language per se. However, her ability to apply will to reason—not, as Pandarus does, toward the achievement of an immediate goal, but in the context of a teleology of ultimate goodness—provides her with the potential for rectifying and redeeming these limitations as a matter of trust or covenant. This is evident in the way Criseyde interprets Pandarus's behavior toward her on Troilus's behalf, as well as in the way she responds to or reads Troilus's own figure in Books Two and Three of the narrative. It is also portrayed in the formulative moment we

have already discussed, the instant of Troilus's overpowering vision of Criseyde at the temple in Book One.

If significance derives from intention, neither Troilus nor Criseyde initially read one another at the temple correctly. On Troilus's part, his determined, literal apprehension of Criseyde's figure not only confuses him with regard to substance and accident, but causes him to overlook what we can surmise of Criseyde's intentions regarding her own figure. For the effect of Criseyde's black dress upon Troilus's eye works in direct opposition to its purpose as a conventional sign of widowhood and worldly retreat. There is no mention in the text of Troilus's cognizance of Criseyde's widow's status, which Pandarus also omits in his discussions about her with Troilus. Any account of Criseyde's earlier history is also absent from the narrator's defining descriptions of her. It is only toward the end of the narrative that Criseyde fills in this background herself in her own account of her past to Diomedes: "I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was, / The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde" (5.975–6). For Criseyde's intentionality is not only shaped by will and reason, but by memory ("On tyme ypassed wel remembred me" 5.746). That the wearing of black does indeed signify for Criseyde a gesture of loss and isolation is emphasized later in the narrative when she discovers she is to be separated from Troilus: "And, Troilus, my clothes everychon / Shul blake ben in tokenynge, herte swete, / That I am as out of this world agon" (4.778–80). Criseyde's desire for liminality is also indicated by her behavior at the temple and by what the narrator has told us of her situation. Having only recently been spared by Hector a death by burning for her relation to Calchas, she stands at the celebration, "ful lowe and stille allone, / Byhynden other folk, in litel brede, / And neigh the dore, ay undre shames drede . . ." (1.178–80).

Despite her intentions, Criseyde inadvertently reinforces the optical effect of her dress upon Troilus through the contrastive movement of her facial expressions:

To Troilus right wonder wel with alle
 Gan for to like hire mevyng and hire chere,
 Which somdel deignous was, for she leet falle
 Hire look a lite aside in swich manere,
 Ascaunces, "What, may I nat stonden here?"
 And after that hir lokynge gan she lighte,
 That nevere thoughte hym seen so good a syghte.
 (1.288–94)

Once she sees she has been noticed, Criseyde's "sommel deignous" look seems to communicate a wish to be allowed to participate at least marginally in the festivities at the temple. Assumed in this visual gesture is Criseyde's desire to remain obscure and her own misinterpretation of Troilus's intentions in his observation of her. For her behavior indicates she believes that his own look is one of disapproval at her presence there, presumably recognizing him amid his retinue as a person of authority and still uncertain of her status in the town. Perhaps, from one perspective, her reaction is not entirely a misreading of Troilus's perceptual behavior if her "What, may I nat stonden here?" is taken as a challenge to his classifying gaze—as if, returning to the *sophisma* metaphor, she means to determine her own significance or place in the spatial arrangement of things rather than be defined by someone else's calculus. In any event, the lightening look with which Criseyde finally answers Troilus's gaze indicates another order of perceptual gesture altogether. For although it may add to the physiological effect of her moving features upon Troilus as a matter of contrast, it also operates on another level; nor does it seem to impart or reflect any misunderstanding on either side. In fact, it offers an instance of the possibility of a willed intention capable of overcoming and even setting to right the other misapprehended intentions of the moment. For although Criseyde's "look" as percept operates on one plane as *species*, on another it communicates her good intentions directly and intuitively, face-to-face, with no mediating representation. It is this act that accounts for the "vaporization of boundaries" that Stanbury observes in the interaction between the couple in the temple passage.

This intersubjective look is also manifested in two of Criseyde's dialogues with Pandarus. In both cases it provides a basis for a willed good intention that redeems actions on Pandarus's part that could be interpreted badly. The first occurs during the elaborate and skillful verbal game that forms the initial portion of Pandarus's plan to pique Criseyde's interest in Troilus by telling her he has good news while making a secret of the content of this news. The game entails a mediation of light and darkness in two senses, since Pandarus portrays the news as something both fair and hidden, and he attempts to use it to draw Criseyde out of her state as widow, represented by the black dress:

But yet, I say, ariseth, lat us daunce,
 And cast youre widewes habit to mischaunce!
 What list yow thus youreself to disfigure,
 Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?
 (2.221–4)

Criseyde's tactic in Pandarus's guessing-game isn't to wear him down with a rhetorical siege, as he has done with Troilus, however. Instead she plays a waiting game, hiding her curiosity by pretending not to be interested in his news and changing the subject by engaging him in small talk. Criseyde's feigned detachment is part of a larger strategy to test Pandarus's intentions, in her words, by "felen what he meneth" (2.387). Her intuitive perception of meaning thus contrasts with the optically-oriented psychologies of judgment demonstrated by Troilus and Pandarus—although this does not mean she does not use her eyes. Criseyde both watches and listens carefully to what Pandarus says and how he says it: "Criseyde . . . herde ek with hire ere / And saugh the sorful ernest of the knyght, / And in his preier ek saugh noon unryght . . ." (2.449–453). Unlike Troilus and Pandarus, however, she submits the combined data of her external senses to a unified and active set of interior senses represented here by touch ("felen"). This interior sense enables her to mull-over and evaluate this data in an inductive and dialectical process of *cogitatio*: a process that, as Mary Carruthers describes it, "depends heavily on free association and one's 'feeling for' a matter."⁶

As with her approach to "dulcarnoun," Criseyde's strategy in evaluating Pandarus's behavior requires a certain attitude of reasonableness or experiential solicitude, and draws upon the virtue of patience, an exercise of both will and reason. For patience is not a passive quality. It is what allows Criseyde to maintain herself against Pandarus's shaping process, and is an expression of her prudence: "What men wolde of hit deme I kan nat seye; / It nedeth me ful sleightly for to pleie" (2.461–2).⁷ This is the same course that Criseyde will urge upon Troilus in Book Four when he is tempted to break with his own rationality and steal her away against the wishes of the town:

And forthi sle with resoun al this hete!
 Men seyn, "The suffraunt overcomith," parde;
 Ek "Whoso wol han lief, he lief moot lete."
 Thus maketh vertue of necessite
 By pacience . . .
 (4.1583–7)

Patience, however, is not Criseyde's sole avenue of response to Pandarus's cajoling. When Pandarus attempts to subvert her strategy by returning to the excitement of his news and asking her a second time to dance with him, Criseyde drops her own artifice and instead engages him directly on an intuitive level, appealing to their kinship and friendship and asking him to cease the stranger's behavior his process implies: "As ye ben he that I moost

love and triste, / Lat be to me youre fremde manere speche, / And sey to me, youre nece, what yow liste" (2.247–9). For an instant her appeal dissolves Pandarus's involvement in his game and he submits to an atmosphere ruled by a general sense of mutual good will, as they both seem to withdraw for the moment from the world of sight to one more intimate—she with a downward glance and he with an uncharacteristic impulse to forgo his rhetoric, whose subtleties are described in terms borrowed from the visual arts—and go right to its "fyn," which he wishes her to take as good:

And with that word hire uncle anoon hir kiste,
And seyde, "Gladly, leve nece dere!
Tak it for good, that I shal sey yow here."

With that she gan hire eighen down to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lite,
And seyde, "Nece, alwey—lo!—To the laste,
How so it be that som men hem delite
With subtyl art hire tales for to endite,
Yet for al that, in hire entencioun
Hire tale is al for som conclusioun.

"And sith th'ende is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawn it on lengthe
To yow, that been my frend so feythfully?"
(2.250–63)

The term "feythfully" finds its own end in a clear moment of pure intuitive cognition in which all conceptual boundaries between the two seem to dissolve: "And with that word he gan right inwardly / Byholden hire, and loken on hire face, / And seyde, 'On swich a mirour goode grace!'" (2.264–6). The moment is brief, however, as Pandarus, recollecting his purpose and returning to his optical and calculatory mode of thinking, forgets this fleeting apprehension of her based on her appeal and the good intentions they elicit. Looking at her now "in a bysi wyse" that begins to make her uncomfortable ("Lord! So faste ye m'avyse! / Sey ye me nevere er now?" 2.274–7), he rationalizes to himself his having told her he would state his case directly with the rhetorical precept that he should fashion his language to suit his estimation of her understanding. This rationalization is based on his opinion that Criseyde will not understand the reason for any circumlocution and will

consequently become mistrustful of him. In another reading of the mirror image, this assessment is seemingly a projection of his own general mistrust:

Than thought he thus, "If I my tale endite
 Aught harde, or make a proces any whyle,
 She shal no savour have therin but lite,
 And trowe I wolde hire in my wil bigyle;
 For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
 Theras thei kan nought pleylnly understonde;
 Forthi hire wit to serven wol I fond
 (2.267–73)

Ironically, Pandarus's behavior causes Criseyde to change her state of good will for one in which she does become disturbed and mistrustful at his return to strangeness. The conversation swings from game to earnest when Pandarus begins insisting his intentions are good in a matter she recognizes may involve her "honour and renoun" (2.297). At this point Pandarus, again operating in a characteristic visual mode, perceives Criseyde's complete loss of control over her demeanor, "Beth naught agast, ne quaketh naught! Wherto? / Ne chaungeth naught for fere so youre hewe . . ." (2.302–3). After telling her the substance of his news, that "The noble Troilus, so loveth the, / That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane be. / Lo, here is al! What sholde I moore seye?" (2.319–21), Pandarus does indeed find a lot more to say as he attempts to assuage Criseyde's fear and mistrust in sixty lines of rhetoric that include hyperbole, threats of self-harm, anaphoric declamations and laments, and emphatic reassurances of his trustworthiness. During the course of this diatribe Pandarus promises her also that Troilus will be satisfied merely with her friendship, and that she needn't give up her free will by binding herself to him in any way. As Criseyde resumes her initial strategy, Pandarus finally advises her to return love for love, which he urges with visually-charged proverbs in the *carpe diem* tradition, supported by the figure of a magnifying mirror that reflects the future: "So longe mote ye lyve, and alle proude, / Til crowes feet be growe under youre yë, / And sende yow than a myrour in to pryde, / In which that ye may se youre face a morwe!" (2.402–5). This causes Criseyde to again become mistrustful: "Allas, what sholden straunge to me doon, / Whan he that for my beste frend I wende / Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?" (2.411–13). Disturbed by her uncle's threats that he will do himself harm over her mistrust, Criseyde finally decides to accede to his wishes by agreeing to be friendly toward Troilus, basing her decision on her determination of a larger good, a decision that

requires feeling ("And for the harm that myghte ek fallen moore, / She gan to rewe and dredde hire wonder soore" 2.454–5), formal deliberation ("And thoughte thus . . ." 2.456–470), and the perceptual assessments mentioned above.

Pandarus's rhetorical outburst serves as a foil to the intuitive moment it follows, and underscores a problem of language per se, where assertions of trust seem necessarily to elicit mistrust. Pandarus appears to understand this himself, or at least he can imagine how Criseyde views the situation. For as the tension between the pair eases Pandarus swears that, whatever his speech might indicate, his intentions were good: "O, mercy, dere nece,' anon quod he, / 'What so I spak, I mente naught but wel" (2.591–2). Criseyde responds with another act of will, one clearly reflective of the semantic implications of the concept of justification in the text, by ceremoniously forgiving him this rift between word and meaning: "'Now wel,' quod she, 'foryeven be it here!'" (2.595).

For Criseyde, the question of "fyn" in this interaction is not so much the narrative point of Pandarus's news—that Troilus is enamored of her and that Pandarus looks forward to the time, "Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre" (2.587)—but what her uncle means by telling her this: whether or not his intentions are good. As was mentioned earlier, the question of whether Pandarus acts as a panderer in his dealing with his niece Pandarus himself poses. Troilus, parsing his terms philosophically, answers no. Through her actions Criseyde is in agreement, but not as a matter of reason per se, but of reason, intuition, and will combined.

The interplay of vision and intuition between Pandarus and Criseyde is repeated at the end of Book Three in the exchange that takes place between them on the morning after her rendezvous with Troilus in Pandarus's bed-chamber, and provides a final gloss on Criseyde's assessment of his behavior. Confronting Pandarus over what has transpired, Criseyde throws up to him his part in the affair: "'God help me so, ye caused al this fare, / Trowe I,' quod she, 'for al youre wordes white. / O, Whoso seeth yow knoweth yow ful lite'" (3.1566–8). She then hides her head under the bedsheet, and what follows may be interpreted as an innocent game, or an act of sexually-suggestive aggression:

With that she gan hire face for to wrye
 With the shete, and wax for shame al reed;
 And Pandarus gan under for to pric,
 And seyde, "Nece, if that I shal be ded,
 Have here a swerd and smyteth of myn hed!"

With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
 Under hire nekke, and at the laste hir kyste.
 (3.1569–75)

The visual action of the scene pantomimes the penchant for hide-and-seek that informs so much of Pandarus's rhetorical activity as Criseyde withdraws from sight—which she terms an unreliable measure of knowledge. Depending upon how Pandarus's intentions are interpreted, the interplay is either one of shared, face-to-face discovery, portrayed as the most intuitive of infants' games (peek-a-boo), or an act of optical possession and violence. However the reader interprets these intentions, Criseyde herself judges them to be good after all. She again grants Pandarus remission for the means he has employed with her, not, we are told, for any calculable effect, but for the sake of forgiveness itself:

What! God foryaf his deth, and she al so
 Foryaf, and with here uncle gan to pleye,
 For other cause was ther noon than so.
 (3.1576–8)

The Christological allusion, which again expresses the concept of *facienti quod in se est*, associates Criseyde with a penitential theology that defines the good as the product of God's absolute free will.⁸ Criseyde's actions indicate a view of the soul that partakes of this will in so far as they reflect what Scotus termed an order of freedom or eminence as opposed to the dependent modalities of nature.⁹ Although Criseyde's decisions do take nature into consideration as a matter of both reason and faith, they are not determined by this order as the product of causal necessity. Although Criseyde is a close reader she is therefore not, like Troilus, a literal reader—because for her neither the senses nor the reason are sufficient measures of truth.

These interpretive assumptions are evident in Criseyde's literary preferences. As Pandarus arrives in Criseyde's house to begin their long dialogue of Book Two, he finds her listening to a "romaunce . . . of Thebes" being recited to herself and two other ladies by a third maiden (2.100). As with her earlier liminal presence at the temple, this reading suggests an attempt on Criseyde's part to mediate her widowhood in so far as her participation in the performance of the text, even as a member of the audience, resembles at some level the performative involvement in the "old romaunce" that Pandarus tries to elicit from her: "Do wey youre book, rys up, and lat us daunce, / And lat us don to May som observaunce" (2.111–2). Pandarus implies this

himself as he attempts to get the conversation going on a favorable footing by focusing on any possible love-interest of the reading, although Criseyde attributes this interest to his own intentionality: “For Goddes love, what seith it? telle it us! / Is it of love? O, som good ye me leere! / ‘Uncle,’ quod she, ‘youre maistresse is nat here.” (2.96–8). Pandarus’s inducement to Criseyde to “Do wey youre book” (2.111) for the sake of the greater “aventure” of his news, however, is not enough to animate her—she will not invest in Pandarus’s secret enough to play the role he asks her to. For she counters Pandarus’s suggestion with a figure for another kind of reading:

Ye ben so wylde, it semeth as ye rave.
 It satte me wel bet ay in a cave
 To bidde and rede on holy seyntes lyves;
 Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.
 (2.116–19)

Although the ascetic reader of saints lives may seem a figure of contrast to that of Criseyde listening to a “romaunce” in her parlor with her ladies, the moral as well as intellectual tone Criseyde takes with Pandarus suggests that her reading practice is something other than what Pandarus implies. For although her text, identifiably the vernacular *Roman de Thèbes*, is in some respects a tale of love, it is not quite the kind of chivalric romance that Pandarus at first assumes it is.¹⁰ For it would better be described as a potential or deferred romance thwarted by the violence and misery effected by the rivalry of the sons of Oedipus.¹¹ As Criseyde informs Pandarus of the subject of her book, he dismissively indicates that he, too, is familiar with the story, but in the Latin version of Statius: “Al this knowe I myselve, / And al th’assege of Thebes and the care; / For herof ben ther maked bookes twelve” (2.106–8). Allusions to Statius and the Thebes story occur frequently in *Troilus and Criseyde*, and to a purpose. For not only does the siege and fall of Thebes suggest parallels with the looming tragedy of Troy, but, as Winthrop Wetherbee argues, the medieval conception of Statius established by Dante’s treatment of him in the *Purgatorio* provides an interpretive framework for reading Chaucer’s narrative.¹² Dante portrays Statius as a Christianized pagan whose path to redemption parallels his progress as a reader of Virgil, and whose conversion is marked by his receiving the sacrament of baptism just as he begins to write the *Thebaid* (*Purgatorio* 22.27–89). Moreover, the *Thebaid* itself was understood to be informed by Statius’s spiritual sensibility as reader in that his attitude toward his material, however dark its portrayal of both the gods and humanity, is one of compassion and transcendence. Wetherbee

argues that for these and other reasons Dante's Statius serves as a prototype for Chaucer's fictional narrator, who also writes in order that his "sowle best avaunce" through his "charite" and "compassioun" for those of whose "wo" he writes, and whose compositional reading experience eventually leads him to a new spiritual perspective (1.47–51).¹³

Criseyde's reading of the Theban material appears to involve her and her ladies in just such an undertaking: an attempt to come to terms with the misfortune and violence that surrounds them through their experience of a literary narrative. For Criseyde indicates that they have been considering certain passages of the tale that happen to reflect on their situation with the Greeks—passages that provide insight into the role of vision in human destructiveness. Criseyde tells Pandarus that she and her ladies have heard how Laius and Oedipus—individuals who in an Augustinian context could be read as exemplars for the sin of *curiositas*—were punished by the gods,¹⁴ and that they have stopped to reflect upon the passage that tells of how Amphiaraus, a soothsayer like Criseyde's father, also meets his destiny:

And we han herd how that kyng Layus deyde
 Thorough Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
 And here we stynten at thise lettres rede—
 How the bisshop, as the book kan telle,
 Amphiorax, fil thorough the ground to helle.
 (2.101–5)

Both Oedipus and Amphiaraus can be read as individuals who have transgressed against the gods by knowing more than they should, and both are punished by being deprived of earthly vision: Oedipus loses his eyes; Amphiaraus the seer falls into a hole. Moreover, Oedipus's eyes continue to function as a motivating factor for the entire destructive process of the *Roman* when they are crushed beneath the feet of Oedipus's sons, since the action causes him to invoke a curse upon his own house (*Thèbes* 500–518).

The fact that Criseyde and her ladies have stopped at the Amphiaraus passage in particular, however, merits special consideration. For Amphiaraus is a resonant figure in both the *Roman* and the *Thebaid*. Although in the *Thebaid* he does, like Calchas, originally attempt to circumvent the future once he has seen it,¹⁵ in both narratives he ultimately submits to his destiny freely:

par argures sot li guerriers
 que c'estoit son jour derreniers.

Comme il certainement le sot,
exploita l'ost an mieux qu'il pot.

By augury the warrior knows
That this is his last day.
Since he knows it certainly,
He uses it as best he can.¹⁶

In the *Roman de Thèbes*, Amphiaraus and his craft are associated through the images painted on his chariot with the liberal arts, including natural philosophy: “Qui des set arz rien entendre, iluec em puet assez aprendre” [“He who could understand this art could learn much from them {the paintings}”] (4967–8; 4729–30).¹⁷ Although he is not exempt from the evil and destruction in which he finds himself (he does the “best he can” by slaughtering as many Thebans as he can), the fact that Amphiaraus submits willingly to his fate may provide a clue as to why Criseyde and her ladies seem to have taken a special interest in him. For Amphiaraus meets death by asserting his free will through his bodily performance of an act of assent, where assent and dissent are the only real choices he has. This willful and physical act therefore serves to frame those intellectual and scientific aspects of Amphiaraus’s character that are reflected by the figures on his chariot, as he employs this chariot to actively pursue his fate in a matter of trust in what has been ordained.

Criseyde and her ladies are engaged in a type of reading that enables them to enlarge their individual perspectives upon their world through the emotional as well as intellectual experience of a literary text. Unlike allegory and demonstrative practices that seek universal truths, it is a reading that cannot suppose to “know” the significance of a text definitively, since the text, like the experience it illuminates, is delimited by point-of-view and context. This is underscored by the fact that Criseyde’s world and the world of her text do not exist on separate planes of reality but are co-extensive—indicated by the remarkable circumstance that the history of Thebes will, by the end of the narrative, overtake and become entwined with Criseyde’s own personal history.¹⁸ Criseyde’s text is therefore not authoritative in the way Pandarus dismissively appears to suggest his own version to be. For her relationship with the matter of the text is not vertical but lateral, nor is the text yet “closed” in time.

That Criseyde’s reading of the *Roman* is affective and intuitive is further supported by the fact that she and her ladies have stopped at the rubrications for the Amphiaraus passage, suggesting that their reading involves a memorial re-composition of the text.¹⁹ Mary Carruthers gives

us a description of the corporeal aspect of this kind of activity in her elucidation of Petrarch's reading of a passage from Virgil:

The insistently physical matrix of the whole memorative process accounts for Petrarch's slow, detailed refashioning of Virgil's description. The active agency of the reader, "discutiens," "breaking up" or "shattering" (one could even translate "deconstructing") each single word as he recreates the scene in his memory, is emphasized: "Ego autem audiui . . . audiui . . . audiui." He re-hears, re-sees, re-feels, experiences and re-experiences. In this way, Virgil's words are embodied in Petrarch's recollection as an experience of tumult and calm that is more physiological (emotional, passionate) than "mental," in our sense. Desire underlies the whole experience, changing from turmoil through anger to repose. The re-created reading becomes useful precisely because in the heat of passion Petrarch's emotions replay that process of change, for he can remember what right action *feels* like.²⁰

It is in this context that we should understand Criseyde's systematic and virtually tactile relation to language—as she demonstrates, for instance, when she reads Troilus's first letter, where she: "Avysed word by word in every lyne (2.1177, also 2.1591). That Criseyde and her ladies are engaged in such a willful and performative "re-creation" of their text is also supported by the fact they are performing the text orally.

Criseyde and her ladies thus exhibit the same affective approach to the text that forms the basis of the redemptive experience Dante ascribes to Statius in Statius's own reading of Virgil. This reading practice is also associated with the literary culture of women in the later Middle Ages, especially as it is characterized by the reading of saints' legendaries and other works that engage the reader in the thematics of *passio* and provide for a latitude of readily response.²¹

Criseyde's reading of her *roman* is therefore very much in keeping with the image of female literacy that she throws back to Pandarus, a reading that involves her in the revision of both the authoritative history he claims for himself and, as Jocelyn Wogan-Brown has noted, the romantic entertainment he ascribes to her.²² Moreover, the image of the isolated anchorite that Criseyde cites provides a gloss on the marginalization of women's literary culture in general. For it is echoed by the image of Criseyde and her maidens, who happen to be reading in kind of cave of their own—a "paved parlour" so deep within Criseyde's house that it takes Pandarus some effort to find them: "Whan he was come unto his neces place, / 'Wher is my lady?' to hire folk

quod he; / And they hym tolde, and he forth in gan pace, / And fond two othere ladys sete and she . . . (2.78–81). Like the self-imposed isolation of the anchorite, Criseyde and her ladies reflect a tradition that “maketh vertue of necessite” by embracing their segregation from the institutions of mainstream intellectual culture and turning it to advantage. This is accomplished through a cultivation of patience and interiority, which for Criseyde is figured by the darkness of the dress that Pandarus is attempting to get her to cast off. It is through this interiorization of experience that she and her ladies are able to come to terms with, and possibly mediate the constraints imposed upon them—particularly those constraints that are so ubiquitous and prevailing as to be unspoken.

Certainly one such constraint in the world of the narrative is constituted by the ring of Greeks surrounding the city of Troy, which seems to take up little of either Pandarus’s or Troilus’s attention in comparison with their love interests. It is thus that Criseyde, regarding Pandarus’s excitement concerning his tendered news, is compelled to ask: “For Goddes love; is than th’assege awaye?”—throwing into relief the great joke of the entire near-sighted narrative (2.123). The siege itself of course is related to the ultimate constraint, death. In this the situation of Troy can be seen to stand as a metaphor for the human condition, as Diomedes will express it: “The folk of Troie, as who seyth, alle and some / In prisoun ben, as ye youreselfen se; / Nor thennes shal nat oon on-lyve come” (5.883–5). It is this constraint for which Amphiaraus serves as a Boethian exemplar of response.

Criseyde’s framing of the rational within the volitional is nowhere more clearly drawn than in the perceptual and cognitive process that constitutes her decision to love Troilus, which includes a reformulation of the traditional allegorical vehicle of the visionary dream. This process also provides interesting points of contrast with that of Troilus’s enamorment, already discussed.

Unlike Troilus—as the narrator tells us in what soon comes to appear a ludicrous understatement—Criseyde does not fall in love suddenly (2.673–9). After Pandarus’s departure from her parlor, Criseyde withdraws alone to a yet deeper interior chamber of her dwelling and ponders what Pandarus has told her in a manner that parallels Troilus’s imagination of her figure while lying in his bed. It is, however, no visual impression that Criseyde considers, but Pandarus’s words, which she again rehearses in a process of *cogitatio*: “And every word gan up and down to wynde / That he had seyde, as it com hire to mynde” (2.601–2). It is through this winding process that Criseyde is able to extract from these words—with their capacity for contextual nuance and variability—their potential or suppositional meaning.

Characteristically, the propositional context into which Criseyde goes on to test this meaning is the question of whether Pandarus's news poses any threat to her exercise of free will. What is equally interesting, however, is that the difficulty of the question itself presents a secondary threat to her will involving the same kind of cognitive fixation that plagues Troilus when confronted by a conundrum of *quidditas*, placing her again in a state of "dulkarnoun." The difficulty of deciphering the truth in Pandarus's language, however, does not prevent Criseyde from moving forward toward a possible solution to her problem by employing a syllogistic logic of "possibilite":

[She] . . . wex somdel astoned in hire thought
 Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
 Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought
 Of peril why she oughte afered be.
 For man may love, of possibilite,
 A womman so, his herte may tobrete,
 And she naught love ayein, but if hire leste.
 (2.603–9)

Once Criseyde starts deliberating, she is prepared to keep going, for the logic of hypotheticals is dialectical rather than demonstrative, and can only lead to probable solutions.²³ She therefore continues her internal debate for an additional hundred and fourteen lines, alternately posing arguments pro and con concerning whether to accede to Pandarus's urgings (2.696–810).

Before she does continue, however, Criseyde's thoughts are interrupted, first by noise from the street, and then by the sensory stimulation of seeing from her window Troilus entering the town upon a wounded horse in battered armor: "So lik a man of armes and a knyght / He was to seen, fulfilld of heigh prowesse, / For bothe he hadde a body and a myght / To don that thing, as wel as hardynesse" (2.631–4). The erotically-charged visual force of Troilus's figure has a direct physical effect upon Criseyde that precipitates a blush, although the blush can also be interpreted, as Stanbury rightly points out, as an affective moment of identification with Troilus's own blush:²⁴

And ay the peple cryde, "Here cometh oure joye,
 And, next his brother, holder up of Troye!"

For which he wex a litel reed for shame
 Whan he the peple upon hym herde cryen,
 That to byholde it was a noble game

How sobrelich he caste doun his yën.
 Criseyda gan al his chere aspïen,
 And leet it so softe in hire herte synke,
 That to hireself she seyde, "Who yaf me drynke?"

For of hire owen thought she wex al reed. . . .
 (2.643–51)

The scene parallels and offers contrasts to the visual mechanics of Troilus's enamorment at the temple. The processes that describe Criseyde's psychological reaction to a powerful visual force are not, as are Troilus's, primarily optical. For although both Troilus and Criseyde are shown to be engaged in reasoning before and after they are struck by one another's figure, Criseyde's deliberations are not voided by sense the way Troilus's pronouncements are. Where Troilus's demonstrative diatribe against love rings hollow after both his arguments and his confidence are overturned by Criseyde's figure, Criseyde's perception of Troilus, because she has posited no axiomatic absolutes, only serves to inform her continued patient, heuristic reasoning process based upon, rather than nullified by, sense experience. Moreover, if Troilus stands fixated by the causal force of an optical stimulus, Criseyde does not—she is clearly described as exercising her will over her interior processes as she "leet" Troilus's image "so softe it in hire herte synke." Criseyde is able to control these processes in part because she is aware of them intuitively, as she shows by immediately translating Troilus's sensory effect upon her into an metaphor for physical disturbance and distortion ("Who yaf me drynke?"). It is an amusing irony that Criseyde therefore is able to exhibit here the kind of rational control over desire espoused by Troilus in his intellectualist diatribe in Book One—succeeding where he has failed—because she is intuitively aware of "hire owen thought."

As Criseyde continues her discursive examination of her situation with an Abelardian thoroughness, foremost in her mind is the concern that love may bring her a loss of free will: "I am myn owene womman, wel at ese—/ I thank it God—as after myn estat, . . . Shal noon housbonde seyn to me 'Chek mat!'" (2.750–4). As she considers the various possible consequences of her problem these thoughts are described as an arbitration of light and darkness:

But right as when the sonne shyneth brighte
 In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
 And that a cloude is put with wynd to flighte,
 Which oversprat the sonne as for a space,

A cloudy thought gan thorough hire soule pace,
 That overspradde hire brighte thoughtes alle,
 So that for feere almost she gan to falle.
 (2.764–70)

Criseyde uses this imagery herself to characterize the vicissitudes of love and the mistrust that seems a necessary consequence of vision to human relations: "For evere som mystrust or nice strif / Ther is in love, som cloude is over that sonne" (2.780–82). The imagery recalls the narrator's description of Criseyde's own figure as both bright and dark, to indicate that Criseyde is grappling with a paradox of her own: the problem of how to determine the good when what we know is ultimately delimited by the vagaries and uncertainties of our variable individual sensory experiences. This problem is related to Criseyde's understanding of her own meaning and place in the scheme of things: "What shal I doon? To what fyn live I thus? / Shal I nat love, in cas if that me leste?" (2.757–8). The imagery of light and dark also sets the stage for the dream sequence that will reformulate these deliberations in a fully covenantal context.

The passage in which Criseyde's dream occurs is prefaced, and in some respects mediated, by another passage—that of Criseyde's perception of the song of her niece, Antigone. Criseyde breaks off her solitary deliberations to join "hire neces thre" (2.814) and a throng of "other of hire wommen, a gret route" (2.818) in her garden. The movement indicates a deliberate act of will on her part and contrasts with Troilus's inability to move past his paralysis of reason without Pandarus's intervention. For where Troilus's fixation is characterized by his inability to logically differentiate the qualities that perturb him ("Allas, what is this wondre maladie? / For hote of cold, for cold of hote, I dye" 1.419–20), Criseyde tests these qualities by framing them within the dialectical movements of syllogistic reasoning in a further series of hypothetical *consequentia*, as she alternately considers and reconsiders each side of her problem. Her eventual decision to cease deliberating and join her ladies echoes her last positive argument concerning what to do as she proceeds to do the best she is able:

And after that, hire thought gan for to clere,
 And seide, "He which that nothing undertaketh,
 Nothyng n'acheveth, be hym looth or deere."
 And with an other thought hire herte quaketh;
 Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh;
 Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bitwixen tweye,

She rist hire up, and went hire for to pleye.
(2.806–12)

Again, it is through a scene of performance, this time of lyric and with a larger group of ladies, that Criseyde is prepared for a “bette minde” concerning the difficult problem before her. Within her garden Criseyde listens with her ladies to Antigone’s song in praise of love. Unlike Troilus’s hymn describing the paradoxes of love, Antigone’s song is the expression of a covenantal sensibility where darkness is presented as a problem of the limitation of human vision:

What is the sonne wers, of kynde right,
Though that a man, for fieblesse of his yen,
May nought endure on it to see for bright?
Or love the wers, though wrecches on it crien?
(2.862–5)

According to the song, the fear and jealousy associated with love are the result of a lack of experience of the beloved, described by the lover’s voice as “Of trouthe grownd, mirour of goodlihed” (2.842–3), facilitated by an overestimation of the ability of the eye to see the substance of this truth. The singer of the song is cast in an imagery of brightness: Antigone is referred to as “Antigone the shene” (2.824) and “Antigone the white” (2.887). The lover in the song expresses the justified life in which love places her through her intentions as a matter of *facienti quod in se est*:

This is the righte lif that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vice and synne:
This dooth me so to vertu for t’entende,
That day by day I in my wille amende.
(2.851–4)

Knowledge of love is not merely a matter of having been struck by love’s arrow, but of having the will and strength to actively accede to and participate in its operation:

And whoso seith that for to love is vice,
Or thraldom, though he feele in it distresse,
He outhur is envyous, or right nyce,
Or is unmyghty, for his shrewednesse,

To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse,
 Defamen Love, as nothing of him knowe;
 Thei spoken, but thei benten nevere his bowe!
 (2.855–61)

The image is a striking one, not only in its remarkable construction of desire as a virtue of the will, but also because Love's "bowe" indicates an additional object in the rainbow: evoking on the one hand the covenantal sign of God's pact with Adam and Noah, and on the other the intense scientific interest that this phenomenon presented for the "shrewednesse" of the perspectivists, for whom it was a source of much problematic speculation.²⁵

Antigone's song strikes a chord with Criseyde, who then initiates a dialectic question-and-answer session with her by asking: "Who made this song now with so good entente?" (2.878). She goes on to question whether the compositions of such lovers might be overstating the virtues of love: "Lord, is ther swych blisse among / Thise lovers, as they konne faire endite?" (2.885–6). Antigone answers that language itself cannot adequately represent the joy of love, and that one has to experience the *quidditas* of love to know love:

For alle the folk that han or ben on lyve
 Ne konne wel the blisse of love discryve. . . .

Men moste axe at seyntes if it is
 Aught fair in hevene (Why? For they kan telle),
 And axen fendes is it foul in helle.
 (2.888–96)

Criseyde then allows "every word which that she of hire herde" to be "prenten in hire herte faste" (2.899–900), not by conflating accident and substance, but by bodily recording every particular: "And ay gan love hire lasse for t'agaste / Than it dide erst, and synken in hire herte, / That she wex somewhat able to converte" (2.901–3). She then signals a movement from rational to intuitive apprehension by abruptly breaking her dialectical session with Antigone with an observation concerning the changing light: "Criseyde unto that purpos naught answerde, / But seyde, 'Ywys, it wol be nyght as faste'" (897–8).

The theme in Antigone's song concerning the delimitation of vision by light establishes a framework for the use of light imagery in Criseyde's dream sequence. The dream takes place in an atmosphere of night, when the blinding

brilliance of the sun mentioned in the song is no longer a factor. Night is therefore described as a time when things not usually seen, including the stars—which were deemed to be more influential after sunset—become apparent: “And white thynges wexen dymme and donne / For lak of lyght, and sterres for t’apere, / That she and alle hir folk in wente yfeere” (2.908–10). The “white thynges” of the day that grow dim with the night represent not merely physical objects, but our unspecified conceptions of these objects—objects that may turn out to be one thing or another.²⁶ Absence of light therefore moves Criseyde and her friends to go indoors together. Criseyde soon goes to bed, reflects upon the events of day, and drifts off to sleep to the song of a nightingale:

A nyghtyngale, upon a cedre grene,
 Under the chambre wal ther as she ley,
 Ful loude song ayein the moone shene,
 Peraunter in his briddes wise a lay
 Of love, that made hir herte fressh and gay.
 That herkned she so longe in good entente,
 Til at the laste the dede sleep hire hente.
 (2.918–24)

Listening in sleep to the nightingale, Criseyde has a dream, troubling in its imagery, yet not in her apprehension of it:

And as she slep, anonright tho hire mette,
 How that an egle, fethered whit as bon,
 Under hire brest his longe clawes sette,
 And out hire herte he rente, and that anon,
 And dide his herte into hire brest to gon—
 Of which she nought agroos, ne nothyng smerte—
 And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.
 (2.925–31)

The dream constitutes a scene of interior vision, stimulated by the events of the day as well as by the nightingale’s song. Within the dream the dimly seen “white thynges” of the world that are the source of Criseyde’s uncertainty, including presumably the dazzling “wordes whyte” of Pandarus’s news, are supplanted by the white eagle. The substitution of phantasm for object is not so much representational, however, as it is transformational. For even were we to regard the eagle as a figure for Troilus, the dream is not presented, from

Criseyde's perspective, as allegorical (although many critics have attempted to read it this way)—for the narrator gives no indication she feels a need to interpret it in a rational way later in the narrative. Criseyde does, however, experience the meaning of the dream in a direct, intuitive way, even as she is having the dream. For although the eagle's action is ostensibly one of violence, the significance of the image as it is composed in Criseyde's heart has nothing to do with the usual first intentions of violence—dread and pain. Instead, what would be fearful is received as an image of exchange and intersubjectivity. The figure and sound of the nightingale that stimulates the dream contributes to this air of transformation in its mythographic suggestion of divine intervention through metamorphosis, suggesting God's *potentia absoluta* over nature and the redemptive power of prevenient grace.²⁷ The transformation itself is realized not through any rational process, but wholly intuitively by Criseyde as she sleeps. For, as the nightingale's song is incongruously a joyous love song sung at night—a time that stimulates a natural fear of the unseen and unknown—Criseyde perceives the events of the dream with the same "fresshe and gay" intentions with which she had invested the song, to which "herkned she so longe in good entente," before drifting off to sleep. The interpretation and the dream are thus a unity, an act of interior vision and assent or assertion, simultaneously stimulated by the song of the nightingale without, the events of the day that arise in Criseyde's imaginative memory, and Criseyde's own intentionality.

From the standpoint of the text, Criseyde's dream cannot be categorized into any of the conventional Macrobian classes of dreaming. For the question of whether it is a revelatory *somnium* telling of some present or future truth, or a meaningless *insomnium* arising from arbitrary natural causes, is not addressed by the narrative, and is beside the point. What is pertinent is that within the framework of voluntarist epistemology—where significance is ultimately defined not by formal representation but by trust and will—the traditional medieval distinctions between meaningful and meaningless dream types do not work. Any dream can be significant in so much as all dreams indicate some intuitive truth about the dreamer and her singular relation to nature. Intellection in this context is therefore not an understanding achieved through a "vision" of abstract truth impressed upon the heart from without through illumination, but an interior understanding that arises from within.²⁸

Criseyde's response to her dream contrasts with Troilus's expectations regarding his own dreams, which he believes are portents from "Joves of his purveyaunce" (5.1446), require interpretation, and (because of his lack of trust) signify bad news. In the first instance Troilus reads what have all the

characteristics of a series of *insomnia* (5.246–66) as signs of impending death: “For wele I fele, by my maladie / And by my dremes now and yore ago, / Al certeynly that I mot nedes dye” (5.316–18). As with Criseyde’s dream, Troilus’s interpretation, and perhaps the dreams themselves, are informed by the sound of a bird—not a nightingale but an owl, which Troilus takes as an augury: “The owle ek, which that hette Escaphilo, / Hath after me shrigh al thise nyghtes two” (5.319–20). Left to his own devices, Troilus cannot know his dreams’ significance, for he hasn’t the interpretive capability to decode them, but he is sure they do signify something and is confident enough of his suspicions that he instructs Pandarus regarding the details of his funeral, albeit “on aventure” (5.298).

Pandarus, however, chides Troilus on his belief in the value of dreams as harbingers of truth, arguing Aristotle’s position that dreams are brought about by a superfluity of humors (“For they procede of thi malencolie / That doth the fele in slep al this penaunce” 5.360–61), and adding that, even if they were meaningful, there is no agreement on how they should be interpreted: “A straw for alle swevenes signiffiaunce! / God helpe me so, I counte hem nought a bene! / Ther woot no man aright what dremes mene” (5.362–4).²⁹ He also criticizes Troilus’s belief in natural portents, which Pandarus argues indicates a lack of reason: “To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is. / Allas, allas, so noble a creature / As is a man shal drede swich ordure!” (5.383–5).

Pandarus’s admonitions have little lasting effect, however, for Troilus is soon plagued by another dream in which he discovers Criseyde lying with a wild boar, that he again clearly takes to be oracular: “O Pandarus, now knowe I crop and roote. / I n’am but ded; ther nys noon other bote. / My lady bryght, Criseyde, hath me bytrayed . . .” (5.1245–7). Pandarus again presents Troilus with an argument designed to appeal to his rationalism: “Have I nat seyde er this, / That dremes many a maner man bigile? / And whi? For folk expounden hem amys. . . . Lat be this thought; thow kanst no dremes rede” (5.1276–81). Dreams cannot be read in the sense that Troilus requires because their interpreters have been proven to be unreliable. Dreams are not subject to the certitude of demonstration or proof. As a substitute, Pandarus suggests an episode of letter writing to serve as an experimental test of Criseyde’s commitment: “if so is that she untrewed be, / I can nat trowen that she wol write ayeyn” (5.1297–8). This, however, is not enough for Troilus, who continues to be troubled by the dream until he submits it to the interpretive powers of Cassandre.

The interchange between Troilus and Cassandre provides additional insight into Troilus’s expectations regarding dreams and their interpretation.

Like Criseyde, Cassandre functions in the text as a figure of ambiguity. Although Troilus deems her to have some pretension to being a soothsayer ("Thow wenest ben a gret devyneresse" 5.1522), the narrator, following Boccaccio, introduces her only as Troilus's sister. Moreover, Cassandre does not interpret Troilus's dream as a matter of oracular pronouncement, nor through Calchas's "scientific" methods of "calkulynge," and "sort" (1.71, 76). Instead, her remarkable method of interpretation consists of a close reading of "a fewe of olde stories . . . as men in bokes fynd" (5.1459–63), which again tell the history of the fall of the house of Thebes and that she renders orally from memory, whose content indicates a compilation from various sources.³⁰

In her reading of Troilus's dream Cassandre draws upon this history to provide a genealogical interpretation of the figure of the boar, linking it to Diomedes through his ancestor, Meleager. Although ordinarily such a reading might suggest a realist understanding of signification, one grounded in a diachronic and vertical idea of grammatical origins with echoes in patristic etymology,³¹ Cassandre's presentation of this material renders her interpretation less authoritative than would at first appear. For one, she qualifies her account of this history by premising it on the veracity of written sources that may or may not be accurate: "And of this lord descended Tideus / By ligne, or ellis olde bookes lye" (5.1480–81). In addition, rather than focusing on the argument of her interpretation by relating the story of Meleager and the boar and then simply summarizing the genealogical association, her "fewe olde stories" swell into a detailed and patient retelling of the entire history of the house of Thebes. As she recounts this history, the effect of her own performative re-creation of it, even as it is summarized by the narrator, presents an inescapable impression of the mutability of human life—as tragedy is piled upon tragedy over the course of seven stanzas as she tells:

Of Archymoris brennyng and the pleyes,
 And how Amphiorax fil thorough the ground,
 How Tideus was sleyn, lord of Argeyes,
 And how Ypomedoun in litel stounde
 Was dreyn, and ded Parthonope of wownde;
 And also how Capaneus the proude
 With thonder-dynt was slayn, that cride loude.
 (5.1499–1505)

For this, Cassandre tells Troilus—as she warns him that her answer to his question about the dream will require patient listening—is a history about "how that Fortune overthrowe / Hath lordes olde . . ." (5.1460–61). As she

comes to the conclusion of her reading of the dream in the context of this source material ("Wep if thou wolt, or lef, for out of doute, / This Diomedes is inne, and thou art oute" 5.1518–19), the particular revelation of the name of Troilus's rival is overshadowed by the overarching truth that change in human affairs is the only truth Troilus should rely on. The narrative material thus fills out the point of the argument; if it wasn't Diomedes it would be another, as Diomedes takes Troilus's place atop fortune's wheel (4.11).

Troilus, however, is no affective reader ready to accept or learn from the necessary fallibility of the human world around him. He therefore objects to Cassandre's interpretation not because he cannot bear to hear that Criseyde has betrayed him—which he already suspects from his own general understanding of the dream—but because Cassandre's lesson in reading supports the conclusion that there is no constancy in human affairs. Troilus thus accuses Cassandre of uncertain logic, calling her a "fool of fantasie" (5.1523), and invoking Alceste ("That was of creatures, but men lye, / That ever weren, kyndest and the beste!" 5.1528–9) as an exemplar of human truth: of the universal manifested in the singular.³²

Alceste functions as an interesting figure for Troilus's expectations regarding Criseyde and her truth. For the only way Alceste can express her constancy is to die:

For whan hire housbonde was in jupertye
 To dye hymself but if she wolde dye,
 She ches for hym to dye and gon to helle,
 And starf anon, as us the bokes telle.
 (5.1530–34)

In the *Franklin's Tale*, Dorigen, who is presented with a dilemma brought about by a conflict of word and reality, also cites Alceste, along with a litany of other women whose only hope of preserving their truth is to choose death before dishonor, "as the bookes telle" (1378). Carolyn Collette identifies this course of Dorigen's thinking as irrational, driven by the same "derke fantasie" (844) she exhibits in her self-destructive obsession with the "rokes blake" (868) of the coastline.³³ Like Troilus, Dorigen's condition of being "astoned" (in this case, literally) is precipitated by vision—on the one hand by the rocks and on the other by the figures of her reading—and is characterized by an ineffectual application of will to the exercise of reason. Her solution to her dilemma—that because she has undertaken conflicting vows she is logically bound to die if she wishes to maintain her "trouthe"—is of course self-contradictory: she cannot remain constant and also die. Although Dorigen

cannot adhere to an impossible standard of truth, her problem is solved not by logic but by will and forgiveness. For she is released from her vows, first by her husband Arveragus, and then by the squire Aurelius—who is in turn released from an impossible financial bond—in a series of willed acts of remission brought about, but not necessitated, by one another.

In her historicizing reading of Troilus's dream, Cassandre places it into a context that is itself delimited by memory and interpretation. The conclusion to be drawn from this reading is that books, and men, do lie—they present us with terms and images that indicate only partial truths at best. In order to be understood, they must be forgiven for the words they use, words, that, however, must nonetheless be considered carefully in a process that combines reason, memory, and will.

The fullest expression of this approach to reading on Criseyde's part appears in the bedchamber scene of Book Three, where she, Troilus, and Pandarus each "perform" their representative psychologies within the little drama that Pandarus contrives to bring the lovers together in his house. Pandarus not only provides the set and lighting for this drama, but also carefully invents a script for it around a story of fictitious jealousy. For he tells Criseyde that Troilus has arrived at his house in mortal peril because he believes she is in love with another person: "Horaste" (3.797–8). Within this drama, Troilus, seeming to lack any will of his own, functions as a passive, almost lifeless, object. Unable to lead himself, he must be guided by Pandarus through the dark house to the threshold of Criseyde's bedchamber by the hem of his garment, as Pandarus lights the way before him with his candle. The moment serves as a parodic reversal of a favorite voluntarist exemplum for the relation of the will to the intellect, in which a servant intellect lights the way before the master will who follows and yet remains in command (3.739–43).³⁴

With no volition of his own, Troilus functions more like an unsteady stage prop than a willing actor in Pandarus's drama, for he must literally be pitched by Pandarus into Criseyde's bed as he swoons at the critical moment (3.1092–97). At this comic juncture Troilus is in a crisis of *intentio*. Part of what conditions his despairing state is the gulf between what is expected of him in his scripted role of jealous lover and his own unexpressed intentions. Like a stage-frightened actor unable to remember his lines, Troilus is unable to say a word from the moment he appears before Criseyde until, after listening to Criseyde defend herself over the course of twelve stanzas against the false accusations against her that Pandarus has recited, he finally utters, at the sight of her weeping, a denial of agency in the matter: "God woot that of this game, / Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame" (3.1084–5). It is at this

moment that Troilus “blacks out,” unable either to light his own way or accept Pandarus’s artificial lighting.

What Troilus means when he asserts he is not to blame for the situation is left to the reader and Criseyde to interpret. Certainly Troilus is aware of, and has offered no objection to, Pandarus’s deceitful machinations (“And Troilus, that al this purveiaunce / Knew at the fulle, and waited on it ay . . .” 3.533–4). Unless we assume he is adding to the deceit by implying he has been himself deceived or coerced by Pandarus, we can only understand that what he means is that “Whan al is wist,” Criseyde will understand that his intentions in the matter have not been blameworthy. Pandarus justifies his deceit on these very grounds—he believes Troilus’s intentions to be good: “For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde; / Therefore I dar this fully undertake” (3.337–8).

Criseyde does take Troilus’s intentions to be good, and it is this act on her part that rectifies and redeems the situation for all concerned. As Troilus swoons, Pandarus asks frantically for her aid: “Yee, nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn / That stiketh in his herte?” (3.1104–5). It is unclear whether Pandarus means by this to give up his scheme because of his actual concern for Troilus’s health, or if he is using Troilus’s collapse, in an hilarious moment of inspirational ad-libbing, to further the “game” that Troilus has just disavowed. In any case, Criseyde appears to be still deluded by the jealousy scheme. At this point Pandarus asks Criseyde to forgive Troilus (“Sey ‘Al foryeve,’ and stynt is al this fare!” 3.1106). This she gladly does, concerned for Troilus’s safety, in words which clearly tell of her faith in the superiority of mercy over all the benefits of light: “‘Ye, that to me,’ quod she, ‘ful levere were / Than al the good the sonne aboute gooth’” (3.1107–8). By this act of forgiveness Criseyde attempts to awaken Troilus’s absent intentions with her own, both despite and because of what has become the primary intervening signifier of Pandarus’s scheme—Troilus’s limp body. When Troilus does not awake, Criseyde commits to a more thoroughgoing process to derive meaning from this signifier by vivifying it. Interestingly, Criseyde’s attempt to breathe life into her text involves representational (“And therewithal she swor hym in his ere . . . Have here my trouthe!—and many an other oth” 3.1109–11) as well as direct or intuitive activities: “Now speke to me, for it am I, Criseyde!” (3.1112). Her efforts also entail a great deal of bodily manipulation, calling to mind once more the affective, physical aspect of Criseyde’s reading practice and also perhaps suggestive of an “infusion” of grace:

Therwith his pous and paumes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wethe his temples tweyne,

And, to deliveren hym from bittre bondes,
 She ofte hym kiste; and shortly for to seyne,
 Hym to revoken she dide al hire peyne.
 (3.1114–8)

Criseyde's comprehensive approach to reviving Troilus's body finally works to bring him to a state of consciousness that is something more than mere scripted role-playing: "And of his swough sone after that adawe, / And gan bet mynde and reson to hym take" (3.1120–1). Now that Troilus is finally able to speak in his own voice, Criseyde takes him into her arms, "And al foryaf" (3.1129) a second time. It is at this juncture that Pandarus douses his candle in the fireplace, and from here on what transpires between the lovers this night occurs in total darkness, with Criseyde—the only character willing and able to act blindly—now doing the leading.

Although Troilus has now been delivered of "bittre bondes" and brought to a "bet mynde" by Criseyde's ministrations, he is not yet able to signify anything on his own behalf. For although he is capable of speech, he still requires a mediating language, a "meene" upon which his newfound intentionality can be manifested. Understanding this, Criseyde therefore returns him to the subject of his ruse, forcing Troilus to mediate between action and intention as she questions him concerning his jealousy with a series of topical *circumstantia* typical of late medieval confessional practice.³⁵ The object of this endeavor is stated by her to be purely one of determining intention:

But in effect she wolde wite anon
 Of what man, and ek wheer, and also why
 He jalous was, syn ther was cause non;
 And ek the sygne that he took it by,
 She badde hym that to telle hire bisily,
 Or elles, certeyn, she bar hym on honde
 That this was don of malice, hire to fonde.
 (3.1149–55)

Finally, Troilus is able to pretend to something of the content of Pandarus's script. Hoping to somehow express his interior intentions and yet hampered by the cause-and-effect limitations of language, Troilus mediates his situation by partially upholding the jealousy ruse, although he does so now purely out of good intention ("And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne" 3.1158). For he states that the "sygne" she asks about was that "whan she was at swich a feste,

/ She myghte on hym han loked at the leste" (3.1159–60). Interestingly, although what Troilus says is still ostensibly a lie, it does provide a ground upon which he can convey to Criseyde his good intentions.

Possibly reflecting back on her all-important look at him at the feast of Palladion in which she did in fact meet his eyes, Criseyde responds with a declaration of the goodness of her own intentions and a castigation of his foolishness at assuming anything else, now certainly seeing through the jealous ruse:

And she answerde, "Swete, al were it so,
 What harm was that, syn I non yvel mene?
 For, by that God that boughte us bothe two,
 In alle thyng is myn entente cleene.
 Swiche argumentes ne been naught worth a beene.
 Wol ye the childissh Ialous contrefete?
 Now were it worthi that ye were ybete."
 (3.1163–9)

Criseyde's return to the jealousy ruse forces Troilus to re-experience the critical moment at the temple which, if not a cause of jealousy, is the cause of his distress in general. This recollective act, together with Criseyde's assertion of her own intentionality, allows her to guide Troilus toward a re-reading of the event and a revision of his understanding of her significance for him, at least for the moment. Moreover, it leads Troilus to repent, just as Pandarus does in Book Two, for any harm he may have caused by the words he has used, ("And if that in tho wordes that I seyde / Be any wrong, I wol no more trespase. / Doth what yow list; I am al in youre grace" 3.1174–6). Criseyde finally redeems Troilus's necessarily "contrefete" speech by ceremoniously forgiving him a third time, adding a memorative penance:

. . . Of gilt misericorde!
 That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this;
 And evere more on this nyght yow recorde,
 And beth wel war ye do namore amys.
 (3.1177–80)

That Criseyde's action is meant in part as a kind of acting lesson for Troilus is borne out when she immediately asks him to forgive her in turn, after which he evinces a new covenantal attitude toward grace and merit:

“And now,” quod she, “that I have don yow smerte,
 Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.”
 This Troilus, with blisse of that supprised
 Putte al in Goddes hand, as he that mente
 Nothing but wel . . .
 (3.1182–6)

Shortly after, Troilus voices this important realization explicitly: “Here may men seen that mercy passeth right; / Th’experience of that is felt in me . . .” (3.1282–83).

Criseyde thus finally reads Troilus, imparts meaning to his limp body, not by unilaterally imposing significance on him, nor by assimilating his (Pandarus’s) story whole, but by causing Troilus to respond to her intentionality with an affective intentionality of his own. Through her reading practice she legitimizes and redeems Pandarus’s scheme, which serves as the necessarily false body over which this signifying transaction can take place, through a justifying act of forgiveness involving an exchange of grace and good intention. The result of this process is represented by a striking image of entwined intentionality that is both tactile and textual: “And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste, / Bytrent and with the sote wodebynde, / Gan ech of hem in armes other wynde” (3.1230–32). For the moment, Troilus is finally able to read Criseyde in something other than literal terms. For Criseyde has helped to turn Troilus from his preoccupation with her image as *verbum mentis* to an understanding now expressed by a moment of intuitive cognition based in the body itself.

Criseyde’s rectification and “redemption” of Troilus’s limp figure tells of an economics that is similar to that of Pandarus in that it assumes value is something other than a fixed substance that inheres in the object itself. Unlike Pandarus (and Oresme), however, Criseyde does not assume—in the spirit of *caveat emptor*—that the determination of a just value will automatically follow from a desire for unequal profit on the part of each party in the exchange. For her behavior indicates she is of the school of Scotus, who held that just equalization requires a willed agreement that is well-intentioned. That is, the parties involved should be willing to give-and-take, and in this give-and-take to adhere to the golden rule: “*Hoc facias alii, quod tibi vis fieri.*”³⁶ This is not to say that external determinants do not come into this equation, but that ultimately the justice of any agreement is determined by good will.

In the reciprocal exchange of good intentions that Criseyde initiates with Troilus at her bedside she does just this, thereby redeeming the value of

Troilus's own (literally) *slydynge* and "contrefete" figure, which in turn allows Troilus to re-evaluate the image of her he carries in his heart that he had earlier coined. Criseyde accomplishes this exchange by engaging in acts of forgiveness, in the name of "that God that boughte us bothe two," as a matter of *facienti quod in se est*.

Although Troilus is now an equal participant in this transaction, however, he still expresses a certain perplexity as to how it has come to be:

This Troilus ful ofte hire eyen two
 Gan for to kisse, and seyde, "O eyen clere,
 It weren ye that wroughte me swich wo,
 Ye humble nettes of my lady deere!
 Though ther be mercy writen in youre cheere,
 God woot, the text ful hard is, soth, to fynde!
 How koude ye withouten bond me bynde?"
 (3.1352–7)

The answer, of course, is through the action of his own volition, something only God ("God woot") can fully understand. For the "humble" action of Criseyde's eyes is something different from the kind of optical force that Troilus uses on his men to keep them in line. Thus, even in moments of intuitive vision, Troilus's attempt to grasp what is happening to him is expressed in terms that emphasize substance, causality, and spatial orientation:

And, Lord! So he gan goodly on hire se
 That nevere his look ne bleynte from hire face,
 And seyde, "O deere herte, may it be
 That it be soth, that ye ben in this place?"
 (3.1345–8)

These conceptualizing differences between the couple, intuitively entwined as they may be, are also evident in the way each go on to express their intentions toward one another. Criseyde's voicing of her intent toward Troilus, once she is satisfied of his good will, is depicted in a now familiar image of sound released blindly into a dangerous darkness:

And as the newe abaysed nyghtyngale,
 That stynteth first whan she bygynneth to synge,
 Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
 Or in the hegges any wyght stiryng,

And after siker doth hire vois out rynge,
 Right so Criseyde, whan hire drede stente,
 Opned hire herte and tolde hym hire entente.
 (3.1233–39)

Troilus, on the other hand, represents his intentions as valuable only in so far as he believes himself able to exercise control over them through time and thus render them unchanging and substantial. He therefore swears a grandiloquent oath characterized by feudal metaphors:

This dar I seye, that trouth and diligence,
 That shal ye fynden in me al my lif;
 N'y wol not, certein, breken your defence;
 And if I do, present or in absence,
 For love of God, lat sle me with the dede,
 If that it lyke unto your wommanhede.
 (3.1297–1302)

Troilus's oath causes Criseyde, whose widowhood is testament to her knowledge of the vanity of such assertions of surety, to change the subject:

"Iwys," quod she, "myn owen hertes list,
 My ground of ese, and al myn herte deere,
 Gramercy, for on that is al my trist!
 But lat us falle away fro this matere,
 For it suffiseth, this that seyde is heere,
 And at o word, withouten repentaunce,
 Welcome, my knyght, my pees, my suffisaunce!"
 (3.1303–9)

In this passage, often misread, Criseyde somewhat humorously interrupts Troilus's violent declaration by indicating his intentions have been adequately accounted for ("Iwis"). For it is these intentions in which Criseyde's "trist" rests, rather than the substance or "matere" of the oath, whose words ("this that seyde is here") "suffiseth," much in the same way the words she has already forgiven Troilus sufficed, to indicate this intention (which itself requires no "repentaunce").

Troilus's impulse toward control and Criseyde's willingness to be satisfied with things as they come is most clearly contrasted through the imagery of light and darkness that appears in the *alba* that the lovers sing as morning

approaches. Criseyde is identified through the song with darkness, as the verses she sings echo her earlier comment about mercy surpassing the benefits of the sun and express gratitude for night as a divinely created time of rest. Her performance of the song continues her association with the nightingale singing its intent. In addition, the song offers an imagistic identification between the singer and the personified night she addresses, since they are both clothed in black:

O blake nyght, as folk in bokes rede,
 That shapen art by God this world to hide
 At certeyn tymes wyth thi derke wede,
 That under that men myghte in reste abide. . . .
 (3.1429–32)

Criseyde's song is a hymn to the night informed by a consciousness of the mutability of nature:

So fast ay to oure hemysperie bynde
 That nevere more under the ground thow wynde!
 For now, for thow so hiest out of Troie,
 Have I forgon thus hastili my joie!
 (3.1439–42)

For Criseyde, the night is a balm that consoles her for the sadness brought on by her rational consciousness, a sadness which she had earlier reflected upon in a Boethian passage questioning the existence of true joy on earth:

Now if he woot that joie is transitorie,
 As every joye of worldly thyng mot flee,
 Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
 The drede of lesyng maketh hym that he
 May in no perfit selynesse be. . . .
 (3.827–31)

Troilus's part in the song, on the other hand, shows him still concerned with the importance of maintaining visual advantage, beginning with metaphors of abduction and espionage suggestive of the situation between Troy and the Greeks:

O cruel day, accusour of the joie
 That nyght and love han stole and faste iwryen,

Acorsed be thi comyng into Troye,
 For every bore hath oon of thi bryght yën!
 Envyouys day, what list the so to spien?

.....

For many a love-re hastow slayn, and wilt;
 Thy pourynge in wol nowher lat hem dwelle.
 (3.1450–60)

Like Criseyde, Troilus also expresses a desire to prevent the passing of time, but with rhetoric that recalls his earlier manipulation of his men at the temple:

And ek the sonne, Titan, gan he chide,
 And seyde, "O fool, wel may men the dispise,
 That hast the dawying al nyght by thi syde,
 And suffrest hire so soone up fro the rise
 For to disese loveris in this wyse."
 (3.1464–8)

Criseyde's part in the *alba* expresses a sense of peace and gratitude, albeit against a consciousness of the mutability of human happiness. It is a song of joy and "sufficaunce," sung in spite of the inevitable changes of fortune that await in the unknown. Troilus, however, works himself into a state of panic at not being able to see beyond the enveloping darkness into the uncertain day ahead. He concludes his part of the song with a plea for assurance fraught with anxiety about his ability to survive the coming day separated from Criseyde:

For how sholde I my lif an houre save,
 Syn that with yow is al the lyf ich have?

What shal I don? For certes, I not how,
 Ne whan, alas, I shal the tyme see
 That in this plit I may be eft with yow . . .
 (3.1476–80)

Criseyde must finally quell Troilus's fear, at his express request, by communicating to him in his own terms, as she tells him that his impression is engraved in her memory, and swears an oath of love:

And with a sik she seyde, "O herte deere,
 The game, ywys, so ferforth now is gon
 That first shal Phebus fallen fro his speere,
 And everich egle been the dowves feere,
 And everich roche out of his place sterte,
 Er Troilus oute of Criseydes herte."
 (3.1493–8)

Interestingly, the language of Criseyde's pledge expresses a foresight she cannot be aware of, while it places all expectation regarding the reliability of natural causality within the frame of the unknowable. For although she compares her own constancy to that of the visible natural order in a manner designed to appeal to Troilus, the *impossibilia* Criseyde cites, characterized by darkness and apocalyptic reversal, predict the "fyn" of the temporal world of the narrative. For Troilus will come to regard himself as living in a lightless world, Criseyde will lie down with her enemy, and the stones of the walls of Troy will ultimately be pulled from their places.

By serving as a "slydyng" signifier upon which value can be posited in dynamic processes of arbitration, Criseyde stands as a potential figure of mediation. This should place her, depending upon how she is valued, in a privileged position in the world of the narrative: a world sorely in need of an arbitrator. As others have noted, within the political economy of this world Criseyde actually functions as a kind of currency when she is traded to the Greeks for Antenor during a time of truce, when prisoners are being exchanged.³⁷ If one were to esteem Criseyde in this transaction not as a measure of material or political advantage, but as an indicator of the mutual benefit and ensuing good will that, in a voluntarist view, is an inhering intention of the act of exchange itself, one can read her interpretability as extending the potential for further negotiation and, through deferral and substitution, the possibility of peace between the warring parties.³⁸ Criseyde theorizes about such a possibility herself—imagining a case where Helen is put back into circulation, provoking a lasting peace and stimulating commerce in general:

Ye sen that every day ek, more and more,
 Men trete of pees, and it supposid is
 That men the queene Eleyne shal restore,
 And Grekis us restoren that is mys;

.....

For if that it be pees, myn herte deere,
 The nature of the pees moot nedes dryve
 That men moost entrecomunen yfeere,
 And to and fro ek ride and gon as blyve
 Alday as thikke as been fleeen from an hyve . . .
 (4.1345–56)

Although Criseyde is "chaunged for the townes goode" (4.553), however, neither party quite views the exchange as an exercise in the golden rule. Calchas argues to the Greeks that they have nothing to lose in trading away Antenor since he will be returned to them in any case when Troy falls. The Trojans esteem Criseyde as valueless balanced against the military usefulness of Antenor. Despite the initial objections of Hector ("We usen here no women for to selle" 4.182), the people of Troy calculate that they have been made an offer they can't refuse based upon a perception of need ("And we han nede to folk, as men may se" 4.191), and force the exchange on Hector as a matter of common valuation. Interestingly, Criseyde's loss of relative value in the estimation of the Trojan populace could be regarded in the manner of a devaluation of currency, finally imposed by Hector to help fund a war, which causes her to be traded out of the country to where she is more highly valued—a typical occurrence in Chaucer's time.³⁹

Undervaluing Criseyde, the Trojans overvalue or misvalue Antenor: "For cloud of errour let hem to discernen / What best is" (4.200–201). Seeking advantage in what they can see, the people of Troy themselves eventually fall to the treachery of Antenor, who will steal away their protective Palladion under cover of darkness in an unequal transaction.

In this light, it is of no small import that the women friends of Criseyde who come to comfort her after Hector's decision regard the trade as something other than a one-sided gambit. Though their talk distresses Criseyde, whose mind is on her imminent separation from Troilus, and though they are dismissed by the narrator for their naive "wordes and tho wommanysse thynges" (4.694), their expressions tell of their awareness of her potential value as a mediating force in the conflict: "Quod tho the thridde, 'I hope, ywis, that she / Shal bryngen us the pees on every syde, / That, whan she goth, almyghty God hire gide!'" (4.691–93). Whether or not this expectation is as foolish as the narrator characterizes it, Criseyde does spend her own substance while in the Greek camp attempting to mediate the fate of Troy with Diomedes. For her long conversation with Diomedes in which she attempts to make him value her city through his value for her is just such an effort at arbitration ("And strangely she spak, and seyde thus: /

'O Diomed, I love that ilke place / Ther I was born . . ." 5.955–57), in which she emphasizes that the people of Troy are of equal value to the people of Greece (5.967–71). Criseyde's good intentions, however, are not enough to save her city. For because she has been acquired in what Diomed informs her was an unequal purchase by her father, there is little chance of her being used again in any trade with the Trojans: "And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde, / So deere, I am the more unto hym holde" (5.965–6). Criseyde therefore cannot effect her plan to return to Troilus by having her father recirculate her to buy back his furniture from the Trojans. In continuing to press his advances upon her with no regard for her petitions for the town, Diomed also undervalues Criseyde, as she points out to him directly: "And that doth me to han so gret a wonder, / That ye wol scornen any womman so" (5.981–2). In any case, the Greeks, intent on making an incontrovertible point ("And men shul drede, unto the worldes ende, / From hennesforth to ravysshenn any queene" 5.894–5), are in no bargaining mood: "Nor thennes shal nat oon on-lyve come / For al the gold atwixen sonne and se" (5.885–6).

Although Criseyde is a creature of intention, she also recognizes that her fate is ultimately subject to the dictates of fortune and necessity. In her negotiations with Diomed she does, therefore, offer him some theoretical hope for gaining her favor, citing the fact that intention itself is temporal and subject to the forces of change, which she characterizes as optical forces:

Hereafter, whan ye wonnen han the town,
 Peraventure so it happen may
 That whan I se that nevere yit I say
 Than wol I werke that I nevere wroughte!
 This word to yow ynough suffisen oughte.
 (5.990–94)

Of course Criseyde will go on to do what she has never done, making a virtue of necessity by exchanging Troilus for Diomed as her options grow increasingly limited. This exchange begins with a process of *cogitatio* that is now familiar: "Retornynge in hire soule ay up and down / The wordes of this sodeyn Diomed, / His greet estat, and perel of the town . . ." (5.1023–25). Although this course will eventually lead her to forget her intentions toward Troilus, which, along with Troy, "Shal knotteles thoroughout hire herte slide" (5.769), it is unclear, according to the narrator, whether Criseyde is moved to actually love Diomed: "Men seyn—I not—that she yaf hym hire herte" (5.1050). For Criseyde's intentions in her transactions with Diomed are now characterized primarily as a matter of will ceding to necessity. For, as

Steven Guthrie points out in his insightful analysis of Chaucer's use of the modals *shall* and *will* in the text, Criseyde's outlook toward the end of the narrative is increasingly one of resignation as she "recognizes her inability by determination alone to conquer unconquerable circumstance."⁴⁰ Criseyde's final assertion of intention concerning Diomedes (made to herself), structured as a statement of logical necessity, is therefore, as Guthrie remarks, "courageous as well as forlorn":

But syn I se ther is no better way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomedes algate I wol be trewe.
(5.1069–71)

In the next breath Criseyde goes on to express her intentions (again to herself) toward Troilus, "syn that thus departen ye and I" . . . "certes yow ne haten shal I never; / And frendes love, that shal ye han of me" (5.1072–80). Her decision, however, admits to the final demise of all worldly intention: "But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve" (5.1085).

If Criseyde has little in common with Alceste, in her resignation to her destiny she has much in common with another of Chaucer's wandering widow's, Constance, of the *Man of Lawe's Tale*. Although it may seem an ironic comparison at first glance—Constance is a model of steadfastness in adversity while Criseyde is traditionally received, as she herself foretells, as weak, fearful, and fickle—Criseyde's lack of attachment can also be understood as a matter of submission to the inevitable workings of destiny, based on humility and an ultimate faith in "Goddess purveyaunce." Additionally, both women serve as a kind of currency as they sail their rudderless barks of fortune from man to man. The relationship between their fear and sorrow on the one hand and their trust on the other is an paradoxical one, calling to mind the problem of Boethius's prisoner, who must learn to assert his will by submitting to his fate. Although Criseyde, whose value is clearly unfixed within the text, is open in her every action to various readings concerning her own "true" intentions, her own assessment of the intentions of others is consistently portrayed as intelligent, generous and forgiving. For although Criseyde, unlike Constance, does not have the benefit of scriptural revelation, she does theoretically have access, in the manner of Holcot's virtuous pagans, to an interior goodness—made manifest in the way she reads the world around her. Her ability to intuitively "felen" meaning, along with her willingness to do the best she is able in a dark universe, allows her to navigate her way in this darkness like the person in Pandarus's adage: "I have myself

ek seyn a blynd man goo / Ther as he fel that couthe loken wide" (1.628–9). In this reading, the "trouth" she discerns is not the earthly steadfastness that Troilus seeks, but a trust in the ultimate good of creation. This conception of truth is linked in Chaucer's subsequent work with the theme of pilgrimage, and is expressed in his meditative short lyric on the subject:

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse;
The wrastling for this world axeth a fal.
Her is non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the heye wey and lat thy gost thee lede,
And trouthe thee shal delivere, it is no drede.
("Truth" 15–21)⁴¹

Chapter Five

The Epilogue

As the notion of the *potentia absoluta Dei* provided a theological framework in which the Aristotelian reformulation of nature could be situated within a traditional Christian context of faith and free will, so the epilogue of *Troilus and Criseyde* serves as a bordering backdrop and frame that contrasts with, yet provides a space for, the finite universe of the narrative.¹ The outermost boundary of this frame, the Trinitarian enigma of the prayer with which the poem ends, provides a final vanishing point into which the temporal and spatial planes of the narrative disappear:

Thow oon, and two, and thre, eterne on lyve,
That regnest ay in thre and two and oon,
Uncircumscrip, and al maist circumscribe,
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende. . .
(5.1863–7)²

Although traditionally only the eye of God, with which this vanishing point is identical, has the ability to see with the limitless perspective of the infinite, humanity's earthly gaze back *into* the infinite can provide us with an understanding of the natural order in which the limitations of individual perspective are taken into account. As Linda Tarte Holley observes:

The true mirror we are urged to look toward and read is "Uncircumscrip, and al maist circumscribe," "eterne on lyve." That mirror has no beginning or end but is outside time and place *while it includes* all time and space to reflect the limitations of Pandarus's and Chaucer's own and even history's verbal artifices: ordinary humans must submit to temporal and spatial borders, for one can neither see nor measure all time.³

The mirror of the infinite does not show everything, but it can awaken a sense of qualification concerning one's understanding of what one does see. Within the epilogue Troilus's final vision represents just such a informed perception, where we find him laughing down at the vanity of earthly feeling from a celestial perspective:

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse
 This litel spot of erthe that with the se
 Embraced is, and fully gan despise
 This wrecched world, and held al vanite
 To respect of the pleyn felicite
 That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
 Ther he was slayn his loking down he caste,

And in hymself he lough right at the wo
 Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste,
 And dampned al oure werk that foloweth so
 The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste
 (5.1814–24)

Although many modern readers of *Troilus and Criseyde* have judged this denouement of the romance to be a disavowal or retraction of the matter of the narrative, Troilus's vision and the narrator's subsequent commentary present not so much a negation or betrayal of the text as an expanded view of it—the view of an audience (which now includes Troilus) regarding it at a distance. This new perspective achieved by Troilus as he looks down and reflects back upon the course of his desire is in part spatial: he has been literally transported to a higher plane. But his psychological experience of the diminishment and limitation of earthly concerns below is also stimulated by his wonder at the firmament around him:

His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
 Up to the holughnesse of the eighthe spere,
 In convers letyng everich element;
 And ther he saugh with ful avysement,
 The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
 With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie.
 (5.1808–13)

Against the marvel of the heavens Troilus views the earth and the concerns of those caught up in its workings as small and vain. Troilus's laughter at his mourners' woe, and even his damnation of "oure werk that foloweth so / The blynde lust, the which that may not laste," is like the response of a member of a dramatic audience who is in on a secret of which the personae on stage are unaware, where what is tragedy from within appears as comedy from without. Yet Troilus's view from heaven is not unlimited. For, to carry the analogy of dramatic irony further, in so much as the play also serves as a kind of mirror that reflects the world of its audience, Troilus's laughter is self-inclusive, which is what distinguishes it from the ridicule he directs at all lovers when we are first introduced to him at the temple. For Troilus is now situated at the point where the visible universe borders upon the invisible: on the "holughnesse of the eighthe spere/ In convers," where the realm of the fixed stars ends and the crystalline sphere begins.⁴ Thus, Troilus's view from heaven is one which provides a twofold consciousness of limitation: that concerning the finite which he can now perceive below, and that implied by the infinite which is yet beyond him. In view of this inclusive awareness of limitation, the difference in perspective between the Troilus of the romance and the Troilus of the epilogue is a matter of degree, not substance. The course of Troilus's love for Criseyde is, after all, linked in the larger view to the causal forces Troilus sees operating in the "The erratik sterres, herkenynge armonye / With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodye." The difference is that he now can see these forces to which those who follow the "werk" of their courses below are "blynde," even if he cannot see to their ultimate cause above.

In keeping with his character, Troilus's heavenly vision of the universe is a Boethian one, with a provenance in the celestial visions of Dante and the Charrtian allegorists. Despite Troilus's insight into the workings of the cosmos, however, it is unclear where it is that Mercury finally leads him and whether or not Troilus ends as one of Holcot's virtuous pagans who has merited the final grace of the Beatific Vision for having done "what was in him" after all. The narratorial commentary of the epilogue does, however, strongly suggest that the universe in which Troilus is situated is a voluntaristic one. The covenantal link between Troilus' earthly will and his heavenly reward is borne out in the passage that begins, "Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love!" (5.1828), where this "love" refers on the one hand to Troilus' love for Criseyde, while on the other to the divine love that is able to override all deserts, expressing in its ambiguity the enigmatic relationship between grace and merit characteristic of voluntarist theology. For, as Peter Dronke once

observed, the "fyn" referred to here has its closest referent in the home to which Mercury guides Troilus, which, I would add, has its own closest antecedent in the true "heaven" on which we are urged to cast our hearts in the preceding stanza, rather than in Troilus's merciless death.⁵ In this light, the narrator's subsequent admonition to youth, which is as much *carpe diem* as it is *memento mori*, expresses a relationship between creature and creator that is more earthbound than at first may appear:

O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she,
 In which that love up groweth with your age,
 Repeyareth hom fro worldly vanyte,
 And of youre herte up casteth the visage
 To thilke God that after his ymage
 Yow made, and thynketh al nis but a faire,
 This world that passeth soone as floures faire.
 (5.1835–41)

It is difficult to read this passage merely as a conventional *contemptu mundi* caution against earthly desire. With the clear reminder of humanity being cast in God's image the lyrical imagery of youth and sexual difference, of exchange, and of the beauty of a world passing as fading flowers describes a place where the mysterious work of "blynde lust, the which that may not laste" is not only inevitable but the proper setting from and through which the mutual gaze of creature and creator can occur. It is a world of motion in which "love" partakes, growing as the creature "up groweth." The gaze itself is not so much an optical phenomenon as a blending of will and vision, an inward casting up of the "visage" of the heart that is in harmony with the upward movements of nature, yet which also implies the distance requisite for free assent or dissent. Because of this distance Troilus does not see with the eye of God, but he can intuitively gaze upon the eye of God. This eye is presented in the text in an image of the very world that Troilus gazes upon when considered from another perspective as pupil and iris: "This litel spot of erthe that with the se / Embraced is. . . ." In yet another view, this image serves as an emblem for a covenantal universe where the finite is circumscribed and benignly "embraced" by the same figure for the unknown that had earlier aroused in Troilus and the narrator such fear and despair, seen now in the context of the greater boundlessness that it reflects.

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) xii.
2. Early studies that explored the influence of fourteenth-century academic discourses on contemporary literary works include J. Mitchell Morse, "The Philosophy of the Clerk at Oxenford," *Modern Language Quarterly* 19 (1958): 3–20; Laurence Eldredge, "Chaucer's *Hous of Fame* and the *Via Moderna*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 71 (1970): 105–19; Laurence Eldredge, "Poetry and Philosophy in the *Parlement of Foules*," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 40 (1970): 441–59; Laurence Eldredge, "Boethian Epistemology and Chaucer's *Troilus* in Light of Fourteenth-Century Thought," *Mediaevalia* 2 (1976): 49–75; Robert A. Pratt, "Some Latin Sources of the Nonnes Preest on Dreams," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 538–70; David C. Steinmetz, "Late Medieval Nominalism and the Clerk's Tale," *Chaucer Review* 12 (1977): 38–54; Russel A. Peck, "Chaucer and the Nominalist Questions," *Speculum* 53 (1978): 745–60; Denise Baker, "From Plowing to Penitence: Piers Plowman and Fourteenth Century Theology," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 715–25; Janet Coleman, *Piers Plowman and the Moderni* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981); Britton J. Harwood, "Langland's Kynde Knowyng and the Quest for Christ," *Modern Philology* 80 (1983): 242–55; and Holly Wallace Boucher, "Nominalism: The Difference for Chaucer and Boccaccio," *Chaucer Review* 20 (1986): 213–20. For a history of the reception of fourteenth-century thought in twentieth-century scholarship see Courtenay's "Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion" in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) 32–36; and Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) 1–21. See also Oberman's influential *Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), in which he discussed correspondences between the *moderni* and

their intellectual predecessors to underscore the catholicity and positive contribution of the *via moderna* to earlier medieval thought. The earlier view, that reduced late scholastic theorists such as Ockham and Holcot to the status of skeptics and fideists responsible for the disintegration and collapse of the golden age of the system-builders, is epitomized in many prominent twentieth-century cultural histories of the Middle Ages including J. Huizinga's *Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. F. Hopman (London: E. Arnold & Co., 1924); Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955); and Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian, 1957).

3. More recent studies that focus on Chaucer's use of late scholastic topics include Kathryn L. Lynch, "The 'Book of the Duchess' as a Philosophical Vision: The Argument of Form," *Genre* 21 (1988): 279–305; Kathryn L. Lynch, "Despoiling Griselda: Chaucer's Walter and the Problem of Knowledge in 'The Clerk's Tale,'" *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 10 (1988): 41–70; Kathryn L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Kathryn L. Lynch, "'The Parliament of Fowls' and Late Medieval Voluntarism, [Part I]," *Chaucer Review* 25 (1990): 1–16; Kathryn Lynch, "'The Parliament of Fowls' and Late Medieval Voluntarism [Part II]," *Chaucer Review* 25 (1990): 85–95; Elizabeth D. Kirk, "Nominalism and the Dynamics of the Clerk's Tale: *Homo Viator* as Woman," in *Chaucer's Religious Tales*, ed. C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson (Rochester, New York: D. S. Brewer, 1990) 111–120; Lois Roney, *Chaucer's Knight's Tale and Theories of Scholastic Psychology* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1990); Carolyn Collette, "Seeing and Believing in the Franklin's Tale," *Chaucer Review* 26 (1992): 395–410; Rodney Delasanta, "Nominalism and Typology in Chaucer," in *Typology and English Medieval Literature*, ed. Hugh T. Keenan (New York: AMS Press, 1992) 121–39; Roger E. Moore, "Nominalistic Perspectives on Chaucer's 'The Man of Law's Tale,'" *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993): 80–100; Robert Myles, *Chaucerian Realism* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1994); Grover C. Furr, "Nominalism in the Nun's Priest's Tale: A Preliminary Study," *Literary Nominalism and the Theory of Rereading Late Medieval Texts*, ed. Richard J. Utz (Lewiston, New York: Mellen, 1995) 135–46; Ann W. Astell, *Chaucer and the Universe of Learning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Richard J. Utz, "'As Writ Myn Auctour Called Lollius': Divine and Authorial Omnipotence in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*," in Hugo Keiper, Christoph Bode, and Richard J. Utz, eds., *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997) 123–44; Richard J. Utz, "Negotiating the Paradigm: Literary Nominalism and the Theory and Practice of Rereading Late Medieval Texts," in Utz, ed., *Literary Nominalism* 1–30; Richard J. Utz, "Literary Nominalism in Chaucer's

Late-Medieval England: Toward a Preliminary Paradigm,” *Journal of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas* 2 (1997): 206–211; and Burt Kimmelman, “Ockham, Chaucer, and the Emergence of Modern Poetics, in *The Rhetorical Poetics of the Middle Ages: Reconstructive Polyphany: Essays in Honor of Robert O. Payne* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000): 177–205; Kathryn L. Lynch, *Chaucer’s Philosophical Visions* (Cambridge, England: D. S. Brewer, 2000); Jay Ruud, “Realism, Nominalism, and the Inconclusive Ending of the Parliament of Fowles,” *Geardagum: Essays on Old and Middle English Language and Literature* 23, (2002): 1–28. For a descriptive bibliography of studies published before 1994 see William H. Watts and Richard J. Utz, “Nominalistic Perspectives on Chaucer’s Poetry: A Bibliographic Essay,” *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 20, (1994): 147–73. It should be noted that the vast preponderance of these studies, my own included, associate Chaucer’s poetry with a “nominalist” or at least a covenantal sensibility, despite Courtenay’s stated speculation at the end of his *Schools and Scholars* that, given the realist bent in the English schools in the years Chaucer was writing, “contemporary philosophical or theological influences . . . of the late fourteenth-century schools on the language and content of English literature . . . should probably be sought in realism, simplified logic, and practical theology, not in the direction of Ockham or nominalism” (379). Ann W. Astell’s nuanced and erudite analysis aside, however, those who have since beaten the drum for Chaucer as a proponent of realism have not provided convincing arguments. See Lynch, *Visions* 15 n.52.

4. Eugene Vance, *Mervelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986) xi. Although Chaucer’s modern readers have been slow to recognize his philosophical side, this was not so with his contemporaries and earliest readers. Thomas Hoccleve refers to Chaucer as both “universal fader in science” and “hier in philosophie / To Aristotle,” in *The Regement of Princes*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, Early English Texts Series, ES: 72 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1897) 76; quoted in Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion 1357–1900*, 3 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960) 1: 21–22. Eustache Deschamps addresses Chaucer as: “O Socrates plains de philosophie” in the “Ballade adressée à Geoffroy Chaucer,” *Oeuvres complètes de Eustache Deschamps*, ed. Le Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1878–1903); quoted in Spurgeon 2: 138. Thomas Usk refers to him in connection with *Troilus and Criseyde* in particular as “the noble philosophical poete in English” in *The Testament of Love*, in *Chaucerian and Other Pieces, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: Supplement*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897) 123. William Caxton describes him as “that noble and grete

- philosopher, Gefferey Chaucer" in *Caxton's Own Prose*, ed. N. F. Blake (London: Deutsch, 1973) 61.
5. Richard Fitzralph, *Summa contra Armenos*, lib.19. cap.35, ed. in L. J. Hammerich, *The Beginning of the Strife Between Richard Fitzralph and the Mendicants* (Copenhagen: Levin and Monksgaard, 1938) 20; part. trans. in W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955); quotation Pantin 133. Chaucer also of course exploits these tensions by poking fun at scholar-clerics, especially in the *Canterbury Tales*. Although William H. Watts has argued that Chaucer's satirical portrayal of philosophizing clerks as "either devious or irrelevant" undermines arguments that he would have taken their discourses seriously, it hardly needs pointing out that in their quarrels with the general populace, particularly in the *Reeves Tale*, Chaucer's scholars give as well as they get; moreover, it would be a mistake to assume that Chaucer's satire, however biting, confuses substance and accident. William H. Watts, "Chaucer's Clerks and the Value of Philosophy," in *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives*, ed. Hugo Keiper, Christophe Bode and Richard J. Utz, 145–55 (Critical Studies 10, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997); quotation 155. On the historical overestimation of Chaucer's anticlerical satire in general see Linda Georgianna's essay: "Anticlericalism in Boccaccio and Chaucer: The Bark and the Bite," in *The Decameron and the Canterbury Tales: New Essays and an Old Question*, ed. Leonard Michael Koff and Brenda Deen Schildgen (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000) 148–73.
 6. See Courtenay, *Schools* xiii; and Pantin 2.
 7. This is one of the theses of her *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology, and the Foundations of Semantics* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988).
 8. Tachau, referring to the syncretism of "late medieval thinkers who did not turn away from the more all-encompassing goal pursued already by Roger Bacon" (*Vision xvii*).
 9. For two excellent complementary discussions of Chaucer's "deep knowledge of and engagement with" the philosophical culture of his age see Lynch, *Visions*, esp. 1–30 (14); and Astell 1–31. For an examination of Chaucer's appropriation of scholastic terminology in general see J. D. Burnley's *Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979). See also Geoffrey Shepherd, "Religion and Philosophy in Chaucer" in *Geoffrey Chaucer: Writers and Their Background* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1974) 262–289. On Chaucer's use of Holcot's *Opus super sapientiam Salomonis* in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* see Pratt. On his association with Strode see Rodney Delasanta, "Chaucer and Strode," *Chaucer Review* 26 (1991): 205–218; and Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Chaucer and Shakespeare on Tragedy," *Leeds Studies in English* 20 (1989): 191–206, in which Kelly argues that Chaucer drew on Strode for his *Boece* glosses.

Holcot, Bradwardine, and Wylciffe all authored treatises popular with the rising class of lay intellectuals with whom Chaucer associated. See Lynch, *Visions* 22–23; Astell 20–54; and Janet Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers* 1350–1400 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981) 18–57.

10. See Barry A. Windeatt, *Chaucer's Dream Poetry: Sources and Analogues* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1982) esp. 79–80. On Chaucer's use of Dante see esp. Karla Taylor, *Chaucer Reads the Divine Comedy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).
11. See Lynch, *Visions* 36–37.
12. See Lynch, *Visions* 26–30; Susanne Conklin Akbari, "Chaucer's Dream Visions," *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory*, 178–210 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 178–86; and J. Stephen Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988) 109–14.

Chaucer's familiarity with the natural sciences is well established. He authored a scientific work of his own, the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. J. D. North examines Chaucer's expert knowledge of contemporary astronomy in *Chaucer's Universe* (New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1988). Martin Irvine discusses Chaucer's knowledge of Mertonian physics in his "Medieval Grammatical Theory and Chaucer's *House of Fame*," *Speculum* 60 (1985): 850–76. Dorothee Metlitzki reviews his use of alchemical imagery in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale in her "Scientific Imagery in Chaucer," in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (New York: Routledge, 2002) 135–151. For Chaucer's familiarity with and use of the science "of Alocen, and Vitulon, / And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves / Of queynte mirours and of perspectives" (*CT* 5.232–4), see Carolyn Collette, *Species, Phantasms, and Images: Vision and Medieval Psychology in The Canterbury Tales* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil* 178–233; Linda Tarte Holley, *Chaucer's Measuring Eye* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1990); and Norman Klassen, *Chaucer on Love, Knowledge and Sight* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995).

13. Sheila Delany, "The Late Medieval Attack on Analogical Thought: Undoing Substantial Connection," in *Medieval Literary Politics: Shapes of Ideology*, ed. Sheila Delany (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) 19–41; originally published in *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 5 (1972): 31–52; also reprinted in *Chaos and Form: History and Literature, Ideas and Relationships*, ed. Kenneth McRobbie (Mosaic Essay Series, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1972), 37–58; quotation from 52. Delany observed that Chaucer portrays Criseyde as a figure representative of a covenantal view of reality in which Criseyde's lack of definable *substance* makes for an intentionality in her construction that reflects a central value of the work itself: "That obscurity makes Criseyde more 'real' than the composite non-entity of the [heroine of the] *Roman* [*de la Rose*],

for the mystery of the will, which allegory dispels by fragmentation, is all we know in reality" (41).

14. Russel Peck, for instance, regards Troilus as the principal voluntarist *viator* in the poem, albeit a comic one (753). Richard J. Utz's follows Delany in discussing Criseyde's naturalistic rendering in his published dissertation, *Literarischer Nominalismus im Spätmittelalter: Eine Untersuchung zur Sprache Charakterzeichnung und Struktur in Chaucers "Troilus and Criseyde"* (Frankfurt am-Main: Peter Lang, 1990), but fails to observe that Criseyde embodies and gives expression to a complex set of related theological, epistemological, and ethical doctrines and behaviors. See also Utz's "'For all that comth, comth of necesitee': Chaucer's Critique of Fourteenth-Century Boethianism in *Troilus and Criseyde* IV, 857–58," *AAA: Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 21 (1996): 29–32; and "'As Writ Myn Auctor'" 134–5, where he focuses upon Troilus as a negative exemplum of Wycliffite realism, but only considers Criseyde in connection with the general contingency of the world she inhabits.
15. On Troilus's Boethian affinities, see Ida Gordon, *The Double Sorrow of Troilus: A Study in Ambiguities in Troilus and Criseyde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 27–60; Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 139; David Sims, "An Essay on the Logic of *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Cambridge Quarterly* 4 (1969): 124–49; and Robert O. Payne, *The Key of Remembrance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963) 204–5.
16. I use the term *perspectiva* in its more comprehensive sense to mean not just the mathematics of light, but to include the physics of "multiplication," the epistemology of vision, and the philosophy and theology of emanation as these were incorporated into the theory by Grosseteste and Bacon: "At least as early as Roger Bacon . . . scholars perceived the whole range of optical concerns as lying not at the periphery but at the nexus of natural philosophy and epistemology (all ultimately at the service of theology). Hence, from the mid-thirteenth century medieval intellectuals sought what might seem a 'unified field theory' of light, vision, cognition, and our expression of what we know to be true." Tachau, *Vision* xvi. For a summary of Greek and Arabic visual theory see Lindberg's *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). See also David C. Lindberg, *Roger Bacon and the Origins of Perspectiva in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) xxxvii–xli. For an account of the transmission of this theory, see Lindberg, "The Transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning to the West," in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lindberg, 52–90 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1978); and David C. Lindberg, "Lines of Influence in Thirteenth-Century Optics: Bacon, Witelo, and Pecham," *Speculum* 46 (1971): 66–83.
17. In his article "Getting the Big Picture in Perspectivist Optics," A. Mark Smith argued that the "ulterior concern of the perspectivists was epistemology and, therefore, that *perspectiva* should be understood as the science not

- of visual perception alone, but of visual *cognition*." *Isis* 72 (1981): 568–89 (569). See also Lindberg's qualification that although cognition is an important theme for the early perspectivists, it is not a dominant one (*Theories* xxxiv n.78). On the semantic implications of perspectivist theory see Tachau's *Vision*, esp. 16–26; and Thomas S. Maloney, "The Semiotics of Roger Bacon," *Mediaeval Studies* 45 (1983): 120–54.
18. See Alistair C. Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science 110–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953). "Much of the experimental work of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was in fact carried out simply to illustrate this theory of experimental science, and all their writings show this methodological tinge" (11); and Smith 569. "Experimental" in this context must be understood in a qualified way, since neither Grosseteste nor Bacon associated the term with any systematic testing of hypotheses. See Bruce Eastwood, "Medieval Empiricism: the Case of Grosseteste's Optics," *Speculum* 43 (1968): 306–21, esp. 306–7.
 19. Bacon held that a concept (*species rei*) constitutes an internalized form that is caused by and perfectly mirrors the *species* it represents as it is multiplied from the object (*res*). As Tachau explains: "On this theory, concept formation—insofar as 'first' rather than 'second' intentions are concerned—is a process of assimilation; that is, one in which concepts are not merely linked to perceptual processes, but are deposited by them as residual images like, or similar to their objects by virtue of a shared nature." *Vision* 16. Moreover, Bacon held that even the imposed signs of spoken and written language (*species verbi*) bear a causal connection to the mental word and thus to the object as a matter of natural signification through habitual association. See Tachau, *Vision* 16–19; and Maloney 127–128.
 20. For Avicenna's classification see his *Liber de anima, seu sextus de naturalibus* 4.1–4, ed. S. van Reit, 2 vols. (Louvain: Editions Orientalistes; Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1968–72) 1–54. See also Soheil M. Afnan, *Avicenna: His Life and Works* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958) 137–142; and Harry Austryn Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophic Texts," *Harvard Theological Review* 28 (1935): 69–133, esp. 95–102. For additional accounts of medieval psychological theory see Ruth Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Warburg Institute Surveys 6, London: Warburg Institute, 1975); Simon Kemp, *Cognitive Psychology in the Middle Ages* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996); Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 21. This is Albertus Magnus's arrangement. For an account of scholastic permutations of Avicenna's description of the faculties in general see Wolfson 116–126. Later theorists such as Thomas Aquinas tended to separate sense memory from intellectual memory. See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 51–52.

22. Tachau, *Vision* xvi.
23. See Tachau, *Vision* 22–23.
24. See Pasnau: “Knowledge of the external world now seems to presuppose a further piece of knowledge: that the world is as our species represent it as being. Given the account of cognition that is being offered, in particular its insistence that we get to the world through species, this further piece of knowledge seems utterly inaccessible. We seem to have lost touch with the world outside us” (221).
25. Tachau, *Vision* 220.
26. Another unsatisfactory solution involved the creation of a third category of being similar to but less real than real being: “*esse intentionale vel diminutum*.” See Tachau, *Vision* 12–15, 20–24.
27. For a thorough account of Bacon’s epistemology see Leen Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge* (New York: E.J.Brill, 1994). “The potential intellect receives the ‘*species rerum*’ from the agent intellect, and this enables it to grasp the cognitive objects originating from the material or spiritual realm” (155).
28. In his early work, however, Bacon had argued that both the potential and agent intellects are aspects of the individual human soul. See Spruit 150–156; and also Z. Kuksewicz, “The Potential and Agent Intellect” in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Hereafter cited as *CHLMP*), 595–601 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) esp. 598–599. Avicenna, *Liber de anima* 126–33 (5.5); Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in aristotelis de anima libros III*, ed. F. S. Crawford (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953) comm.5, 388–9.
29. See Thomas Aquinas, *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, in *Opera Omnia* 43, 243–314 (Roma: Editori di San Tommaso, 1976) esp. 307–10 (cap.4); trans. Beatrice H. Zedler in Thomas Aquinas, *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists: De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968).
30. Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri de anima* (lib.3, cap.8), in *Opera omnia* 45:1 (Rome:Commissio Leonina, 1984) esp. 208–13 (lib.3, cap.2); trans. Robert Pasnau in Thomas Aquinas, *A Commentary on Aristotle’s De anima* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) 351–8.
31. “Sed contra, mens humana illustrata est divinitus lumine naturali, secundum illud Psalmi (4,7): ‘Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, domine.’ Si ergo hoc lumen, quia creatum est, not sufficit ad veritatem conspiciendam, sed requirit novam illustrationem, pari ratione lumen superadditum non sufficiet, set indigebit alio lumine, et sic in infinitum, quod numquam compleri potest, et sic impossibile erit cognoscere aliquam veritatem. Ergo oportet stare in primo lumine, ut scilicet mens lumine naturali sine aliquo superaddito possit veritatem videre” [*On the contrary*, the human mind is divinely illumined by a natural light, according to Psalm 4:7: ‘The light of

- your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us.' Therefore, if this light, because it is created, is not adequate to know the truth, but needs a new illumination, the added light with equal reason will not suffice, but will require another light, and so on to infinity—a process that can never be completed. And so it will be impossible to know any truth. Therefore we must depend on the first light, so that the human mind can see the truth by its natural light without anything being added."] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*, ed. Bruno Decker (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965) 58–9 (1.1); trans. Armand Maurer in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Faith, Reason and Theology: Questions I–IV in his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius* (Ontario: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987) 15–16.
32. See Edward P. Mahoney, "Sense, Intellect, and Imagination in Albert, Thomas, and Siger," in *CHLMP*, 602–622 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) esp. 610–611.
 33. For a discussion of the historical use of the terms *liber arbitrium* and *voluntas libera* in scholastic psychology, and an excellent account of the development of late medieval voluntarism in general, see Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1995) 94–137.
 34. See Articles 150–169, esp. 163: "Quod voluntas necessario prosequitur, et quod non potest abstinere ab eo, quod ratio dictat" ["That the will necessarily pursues what is firmly believed by reason and that it cannot abstain from that which reason dictates"], and 164: "Quod voluntas hominis necessatur per suam cognitionem, sicut appetitus bruti" ["That man's will is necessitated by his cognition, like the appetite of a beast"]. Pierre Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroïsme Latin au XIII^e Siècle* (Deuxième édition revue et augmentée, Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie de l'Université, 1911) 187–88; trans. in Kent 77.
 35. Courtenay, *Schools* 285–6.
 36. Murdoch, "Philosophy and the Enterprise of Science in the Later Middle Ages," in *The Interaction Between Science and Philosophy*, ed. Yehuda Elkana, 50–74 (Atlantic Heights, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1974) 62.
 37. Bernard, "De gratia et libero arbitrio," II.3 in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera*, ed. Jean LeClercq, Charles H. Talbot and H.M. Rochais, 8 vols. in 9 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957) 3:168.
 38. Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum sententiarum* II.410–11, ed. B. Jansen, *Bibliotheca franciscana scholastica medii aevi* 4–6, (Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi] prope Florentiam: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1922–26); quoted in Kent 134–5.
 39. On Scotus's theory of intuitive cognition see Allan B. Wolter, "Duns Scotus on Intuition, Memory, and Our Knowledge of Individuals," in *History of Philosophy in the Making: A Symposium of Essays to Honor Professor James D. Collins*, ed. L. J. Thro, 81–104 (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America,

- 1982); and Tachau, *Vision* 68–81. On intuitive cognition in general see Sebastian J. Day, *Intuitive Cognition: A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics*. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1947; and John Boler, “Intuitive and Abstractive Cognition,” in *CHLMP* 460–478, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny and Jan Pinborg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 463–466.
40. Via the principle of parsimony (“Ockham’s Razor”), *species* are not necessary for cognition and so do not exist: “Ad cognitionem intuitivam habendam non oportet aliquid ponere praeter intellectum et rem cognitam, et nullam speciem penitus. Hoc probatur, quia frustra fit per plura quod potest fieri per pauciora” [“In order to have an intuitive cognition, one need not postulate anything beyond intellect and the thing cognized, and no species at all. This is proved, because what is done through many is done in vain if it can be done through fewer.”] William of Ockham, *Reportatio in libros II–IV Sententiarum* V.268, ed. G. Gál et. al., in *Guillelmi de Ockham opera philosophica et theologica ad fidem codicum manusccriptorum edita, Opera theologica V–VII* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: 1981–84); quoted and trans. in Pasnau 189.
 41. “Dicendum est igitur quod quodlibet universale est una res singularis, et ideo non est universal nisi per significationem, quia est signum plurium.” William of Ockham, *Summa logicae* I.14, eds. Philotheus Boehner, Gedeon Gál, Stephanus Brown, in *Opera philosophica, Opera philosophica et theologica* (St. Bonaventure, New York: Institute Franciscani, 1974) 1: 48.
 42. I use the problematic terms “nominalism” and “nominalist” as a fiction of last resort. I employ them to indicate the epistemological and linguistic position that denies the existence of universal forms as *realia*. By “terminism” I mean the propositional logic of the *moderni* based upon supposition theory and meta-linguistic analysis, which does not necessarily presume a nominalist epistemology, although some use these two terms interchangeably. For a history of the use of the term see William Courtenay, “Nominalism” 26–59. On Ockham’s contribution to the development of terminist logic, see Courtenay, *Schools* 221–33.
 43. With certain exceptions, such as our knowledge of the volitions of the will. See Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987) 2:795–8.
 44. For an overview of the notion of capacity and volition, which Courtenay termed the “‘principal thesis’ of nominalism,” see his “Covenant and Causality in Pierre d’Ailly,” *Speculum* 46 (1971): 94–119 (96); and “Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion,” in *The Pursuit of Holiness* 26–59. Both essays are reprinted in his *Covenant and Causality*. On the origins of the concept, see Courtenay’s, “Sacrament, Symbol, and Causality in Bernard of Clairvaux,” in *Covenant and Causality in Medieval Thought* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984); originally published in *Bernard of Clairvaux: Studies Presented to Dom Jean Leclercq* (Cistercian Studies Series 23, Washington,

D.C.: Cistercian Publications, 1973) 111–122. For a wider history see Courtenay's *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990). For a discussion of the evolution of our understanding of the dialectic of divine power in general and the notion of the *potentia absoluta Dei* in particular, and a caution regarding its undifferentiated use in literary discussions, see his essay "The Dialectic of Divine Omnipotence in the Age of Chaucer: A Reconsideration," in *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives*, ed. Hugo Keiper, Christophe Bode and Richard J. Utz, 111–21, *Critical Studies* 10 (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997). In this later work Courtenay builds on recent scholarship that discriminates between the canonist view of divine power that was adopted in part by Scotus, which distinguishes between the way God ordinarily acts and the way he may act under extraordinary circumstances, and the more traditional theological view held by Ockham in which capacity and volition are two aspects of the same self-regulating power. My reading of *Troilus & Criseyde* indicates that Chaucer, like many of his contemporaries, was eclectic in his application of the doctrine, drawing upon both currents—with an emphasis, however, on the traditional view. (Exceptions include certain Ovidian passages suggestive of the inordinate. For instance, see Chapter 4, p. 78).

45. See John E. Murdoch, "Philosophy and the Enterprise of Science," in *The Interaction Between Science and Philosophy* (Atlantic Heights, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1974) 50–74, esp. 58–62; and Murdoch, "The Analytic Character of Late Medieval Learning: Natural Philosophy without Nature," in *Approaches to Nature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lawrence D. Roberts, 171–213 (*Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies* 16, Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982).
46. See Murdoch: "the theory of supposition as ensconced in Ockham's particularism allowed one to rephrase and re-examine almost all of the traditional problems within natural philosophy. This recasting took the form, as it were, of no longer speaking about the things or entities involved in a given problem, but rather now about propositions whose terms stood for (*supponit pro*) such entities. Thus, elucidation of the kind of supposition terms were held to have within a given problematic proposition became a standard way of resolving the problem at issue. . . ." "Philosophy and the Enterprise of Science" 60.
47. Joel Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century: Money, Market Exchange, and the Emergence of Scientific Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
48. "One of the most important metaphysical principles for Aquinas is that order always implies the existence of an active, intelligent orderer. . . . This principle is negated with the acceptance of an economic system in which equality is created as an accidental product of competing desires within an impersonal process, and where value (price) is detached from individual judgment." Kaye 98.

49. Kaye 115.
50. Katherine Tachau makes precisely this point concerning Robert Holcot, whose radical voluntarism provided a space of contingent causality which validated his deep involvement in astrological studies. "Logic's God and the Natural Order in Late Medieval Oxford: the Teaching of Robert Holcot," *Annals of Science*, 53 (1996): 235–267.
51. "Ad primum dicendum quod in ista propositione natura supponit pro deo. Ille enim est qui omnia naturalia ordinat secundum bene placitum sue voluntatis et concedendum est quod non deficit in necessariis. Nam si homo facit quod in se est satis informabitur de illis que sunt necessaria ad salutem suam" ["To the first point, it should be said that in this proposition nature supposes for God. For God orders all of nature according to his pleasure, and it will be conceded that it does not lack in necessary things. For if man does what is within himself, he will be sufficiently provided with those things that are necessary for his salvation"]. Robertus Holcot, [*Lectiones Super Libros Sapientiae*, (Hagenowe: [H. Gran], 1494; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1974) cap.2, lect.28B; my translation. For a thorough account of this notion from its patristic beginnings to the Reformation, see Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 83–100. Also see McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987) 81–3.
52. Duns Scotus defines *recta ratio* as those intellectual acts which make of the will a "rational potency" in its affection for justice. See his *Quaestiones super libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis* ix.q.15, discussed in Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, trans. Alan B. Wolter, ed. William A. Frank (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1997) 21 (selections 5 and 2). *Recta ratio* can consist of demonstrative conclusions derived from self-evident moral principles, but generally also involves practical knowledge of particulars derived from experience, or *prudentia*. See also the discussion of Ockham's use of the term in Gordon Leff, *William of Ockham* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975) 480–83.
53. See also the discussion of Holcot's writing on justification in Oberman's *Harvest* 235–248: ". . . Holcot points out that the supernatural articles of faith are not contrary to reason but go beyond reason. To deny reason is indeed blameworthy, but one does not deny reason if one grants that reason cannot reach beyond itself into the realm of supernatural faith which transcends the realm of the senses. The *facere quod in se est* means for Holcot that the act of faith is not merely the exercise of the theoretical reason but an exercise of the whole man: *sine discursu rationis et perceptione voluntaria veritatis, fides non habetur*" (241, quoting Holcot, *Super Libros Sapientiam* cap.2, lect.28B).
54. See Courtenay, *Schools* 319.

55. For instance, see: "For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I" (2.18); "Myn auctour shal I folwen, if I konne" (2.49); "And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde" (4.1415). For more examples see Barry Windeatt, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992): "The narrator mentions texts on twenty-nine occasions in the poem, and on twenty-two of these he asserts or implies his subjection to his sources" (40). All citations to Chaucer's texts are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, edited by Larry D. Benson (Third Edition, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
56. I am aware that the major paradigms for medieval covenantality posit an author or "legislator," whether it is God or a political authority, who *ascribes* meaning, value, or a course of action to be followed to secure a promised result. However, I am using the term according to the sense in which it denotes a radically contingent universe whose terms are ultimately based upon a system of trust, and where one cannot presume to know the mind of its "Author."
57. See Tachau, "Logic's God," 263.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. For an informative introduction to this tradition see Eric Jager, *The Tempter's Voice: Language and the Fall in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), esp. 82–88. "In transforming the Fall into the genesis of hermeneutics, Augustine did more than just allegorize the historical Adam and Eve as types for readers and interpreters. Probing more deeply into the readerly implications of the Fall than any of his predecessors, Augustine used the first humans as emblems for the faculties involved in the psychology of reading. In particular, he analyzed what Genesis 3 suggested about the pleasure of the text and its problematic role in readerly experience" (82). See also Klassen 4–16.
2. On the program of propositional exercises undertaken by undergraduates at Oxford in the fourteenth century see Courtenay, *Schools* 30–36; and Edith Dudley Sylla, "The Oxford Calculators," *CHLMP* 542–545. See also E. J. Ashworth, "Theories of the Proposition: Some Early Sixteenth Century Discussions," *Franciscan Studies* 38 (1978): 83–87; Gabriel Nuchelmans, "The Semantics of Propositions" *CHLMP* 203–210; Paul Vincent Spade, "Insolubilia" *CHLMP* 246–253; and Tachau, *Vision* 202–207, 212–216, 251–252, 261–274, 302–310.
3. The passage particularly resembles physical *sophismata* involving terms of degree characteristic of the *questiones* of the Oxford Calculators. See Norman Kretzmann, "Syncategoremata, Sophismata, Exponibilia," in *CHLMP* 211–241, esp. 215; and Edith Sylla, "The Oxford Calculators," in *CHLMP* 540–563, esp. 549.
4. The sophismatic assertion suggested by the passage is one of a compound conjunctive type (two statements joined by the syncategorematic copula)

which contains an apparent composite fallacy (Socrates is black, yet Socrates is white to the A degree). See Wilson, *William Heytesbury* 13–14, and William of Ockham, *Summa Logicae* II.32, ed. and trans. in Alfred J. Fredoso and Henry Shuurman, *Ockham's Theory of Propositions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980) 186.

5. See Wilson, *Heytesbury* 18–21.
6. For a concise account of the quantification of qualities in late medieval thought, see Kaye 172–77. For a more lengthy discussion see Edith Sylla, “Medieval Quantification of Qualities: The ‘Merton School,’” *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 8 (1971): 7–39.
7. See the discussion of the scholastic critique of poetic language in Marcia Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968): “The view that poetry has no claims to truth was quite popular. It can be found in the works of Robert Grosseteste and the Franciscan Bonaventura as well as in the works of the Dominicans Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. However, it is usually Aquinas’s dicta on poetry that have been cited to illustrate this scholastic position. Aquinas places poetry on the lowest plane of logic. Poetry is regarded as subrational, as incapable of signifying truth. Poems cannot be grasped by the discursive reason because they deal with fables and illusions, not with realities” (160).
8. “By this resoun, thanne, ther comen many maner knowynges to dyverse and differynge substaunces.” *Consolation* V.pr.5.23–25; trans. Chaucer, “Boece.” See also Thomas Aquinas: “. . . omne quod recipitur in aliquo recipitur in eo per modum recipientis” [“. . . everything which is received in a thing is received in it according to the mode of the recipient”]. *Questiones disputatae de veritate* q.19.a.1.260 (2 vols. Opera Omnia 22, Roma: ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1972) 2: 564; trans. James V. McGlynn, *Truth* (3 vols., Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953) 2: 388.
9. Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum* 1.1.obj.7.1vA (2 vols., St. Bonaventure, New York: Franciscan Press, 1953); quoted and trans. in Pasnau 222.
10. *Consolation* II.met.7.15–21; trans. Chaucer, “Boece.”
11. The terms “Socrates,” “Plato,” “white,” and “black” are used as variables for qualities in medieval logic from the time of Boethius, and are prolific in terminist propositions of all kinds.
12. See the *Knight’s Tale*, where Palamon describes Emilye’s effect upon him: “But I was hurt right now thurghout myn ye / Into myn herte . . . (I.1096–7); and “Merciles Beaute”: “Your yen two wol slee me sodenly; / I may the beautee of hem not sustene, / So woundeth hit thourghout my herte kene (1–3). For a discussion of the tradition in general see Ruth H. Cline, “Hearts and Eyes,” *Romance Philology* 25 (1971–72): 263–97.
13. Sarah Stanbury, “The Lover’s Gaze in Troilus and Criseyde,” *Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde: ‘Subgit to alle Poesye’: Essays in Criticism*, ed. R. A.

- Shoaf, (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992) 224–38 (227). “Medieval optics, even as it debated extramission or intromission of *species*, was grounded on a model of the material or at least kinetic relationship between eye and object. Chaucer uses this imagery to literalize the moment at which the self is reconfigured by desire for the other, the moment in which active and passive become obscured” (233).
14. Stanbury 231.
 15. See William J. Courtenay, “The King and the Lead Coin: The Economic Background of ‘*sine qua non*’ Causality,” *Traditio* 28 (1972). “The opinion that Thomas rejected was that the sacraments effect grace not through inherent, created virtue but rather through a pact, covenant, or ordination of God . . .” (185).
 16. “In light of the frequent association of covenantal causality in the sacraments with various economic practices of the thirteenth century, may it not be that opposition to the covenantal theory, such as we find in Thomas Aquinas, was based on an unwillingness to recognize value apart from intrinsic or inherent value? May not the rejection of *sine qua non* causality depend as much on economic presuppositions as theological ones?” Courtenay, “The King and the Lead Coin” 202–3. Courtenay goes on to note that *bonitas intrinseca* indicates usefulness based on something inherent in the object (for instance, silver), not an absolute value within the natural order (204).
 17. See Kaye 15–36.
 18. R. A. Shoaf, *Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books, 1983); quotation from 108. Shoaf gives an insightful reading of the monetary imagery of *Troilus and Criseyde* in which he focuses on the question of representation provoked by Criseyde’s figure that Pandarus and Troilus remind and efface as “false coiners” (111). Although my own reading is for the most part in agreement, Shoaf’s emphasis on Criseyde’s true value or “original character” (albeit as a mutable alloy), whose significance has been placed there by a higher Authority, places too much emphasis on “auctoritas” and does not take into its ken the covenantal landscape of the poem reflected in Criseyde’s point-of-view. Thus Shoaf’s unforgiving reading of Pandarus and his poetics of imposition does not apprehend Pandarus as a type for Chaucer’s projection of himself as author working in a necessarily fallen medium, but rather as the antithesis of the moral author he believes Chaucer is trying to define. Chaucer’s use of monetary imagery, I would argue, differs from less qualified intellectualist assumptions about value that condition Dante’s use of the same imagery in the *Commedia* upon which Shoaf’s reading of *Troilus and Criseyde* is based.
 19. See Bacon: “Sed existentes in patria comparantur illis rebus quae recipiunt lucem penitus secundum rectum incessum omni exclusa declinatione, quantum possibile est creaturae, et quantum exigit ordo divini iustitiae,

qui reddit unicuique secundum quod meruit" ["But those living in the kingdom are compared to those things that receive the light within a straight course without deviation, as far as is possible in a creature, and as far as the order of divine justice exacts, which returns to every man according to his deserts"]. *Opus Maius* 4.4.16, ed. Burke 1: 239; trans. Bridges 1: 217.

20. See Oresme: "Et dum eam comprehendere non possumus ipsam irrationalem et incommensurabilem appellamus. Solet si quidem sepe contingere ut homo subtilis in multa variatione pulchritudinem percipiat cuius diversitatis ordinem homo rudis non advertens totum estimat fore confusum, sicut irrationalem proportionem vocamus quam nostra ratio capere nequit. Et ipsam tamen distincte cognoscit dei ratio infinita et divino conspectui loco suo posita placet celestesque circuitus efficit pulchriores." ["When the measure is indeterminable, we call it irrational and incommensurable. It happens frequently that a subtle man perceives the beauty in much diversity, while an ignorant man, who fails to consider the whole, thinks that the sequence of events in this diversity is confused, just as he does not realize that what we call an irrational ratio is part of our order and plan. And yet the infinite plan of God distinctly recognises the diversity which, put in its proper place, is pleasing to the divine sight and makes the celestial revolutions more beautiful"]. *Nicole Oresme and the Kinematics of Circular Motion: Tractatus de commensurabilitate vel incommensurabilitate motuum celi*, ed. and trans. Edward Grant (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971) 306–7. See also Kaye 212–220.
21. See Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) esp. 56–59, 90–93. "In lovesickness the estimative faculty misfunctions because it is misled by an excessively pleasing perception, so strong that it eclipses other sense impressions that might contradict it. Hence the estimation judges a form to be better, more noble, and more desirable than all others: it has 'overestimated' the object" (56).
22. "It [the imagination] can be led astray either by not heeding the evidence of the senses, or by refusing the rule of the intellect." Wack, paraphrasing a passage from Peter of Spain's commentary on the *Viaticum* (92). See also Chapter Three note 2 above.
23. See for example John Pecham's account of the effect of darkness on the perception of firelight: "De die minor apparet claritas quia maiori claritate circumfunditur. De nocte apparet maior quia tenebris iuxta positus in toto suo ambitu libere presentatur" ["The brightness appears smaller during the day [than at night] because it is surrounded by greater brightness. It appears larger at night because, when entirely surrounded by darkness, it is freely exhibited to view"]. John Pecham, *Perspectiva communis*, in *John Pecham and the Science of Optics* prop.11 [13], ed. and trans. David C. Lindberg (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970) 87.

24. Boethius describes the operation of the soul devoid of active reason in terms borrowed from the Stoics: "The porche . . . broughte somtyme olde men [the Stoics], ful dirke in hir sentences, that wenden that ymages and sensibilities weren enprientid into soules from bodyes withoute-forth; ryght as we ben wond somtyme by a swift poyntel to fycchen lettres emprientid in the smothnesse or in the pleyness of the table of wex or in parchemyn that ne hath no figure ne note in it. But yif the thryvyng soule ne unpliteth nothing (that is to seyn, ne doth nothing) by his propre moevynges, but suffrith and lith subgit to the figures and to the notes of bodies withoute-forth, and yeldith ymages ydel and vein in the manere of a mirour, whennes thryveth thanne or whennes comith thilke knowyng in our soule, that discernith and byholdith alle things? . . . Certes this strenghte is cause more efficient, and mochel more myghty to seen and to knowe thinges, than thilke cause that suffrith and reseceyvethe the notes and the figures empressid in manere of matere." *Consolation* V.met.4.1–46; trans. Chaucer, "Boece."
25. The tradition of identifying the heart as the terminus of sensation dates at least to Aristotle: "Similiter species omnium sensibilibum vadunt ad cor, quia ibi est radicaliter virtus sensitiva, sicut Aristoteles et Avicenna determinant" ["Similarly, the species of all sensible things go to the heart, since there the sensitive power has its seat, as Aristotle and Avicenna determine. Roger Bacon, *De multiplicatione de specierum* 2.2.110, ed. and trans. in Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature* 102–3. Bacon also follows Avicenna in conceiving of the imagination as similar to a wax tablet: "Avicennam ponentem exemplum de sigillo, cujus speciem aqua bene recipit, set non retinet propter sui superfluum humiditatem: cera vero bene retinet propter sui temperatam humiditatem cum siccitate. . . . Et sic est in organo sensus communis et imaginationis" ["Avicenna cites as an example a seal, the image of which water readily receives, but does not retain owing to the superabundant moistness; wax, however, retains the image very well, owing to its tempered moistness with dryness. . . . Such is the case in the organ of the common sense and of imagination"]. *Opus Maius* 5.1.2, ed. Bridges 2: 5; trans. Burke 2: 422.
26. See *Opus Maius* pars 3, ed. Bridges 1: 66–96; trans. Burke 1: 75–115.
27. See Murray Wright Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Medieval Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1927) 182–4.
28. See Aristotle, *Nichomachian Ethics* vi.3 (1139b.20); trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999) 88.
29. See Aristotle, *Ethics* vi.7 (1141a.25); trans Irwin 90. See also Irwin's Glossary description of Aristotle's definition of *theoria*: "This is study in the sense in which I 'study' a face or a scene that I already have in full view" (349).
30. See Aristotle, *Ethics* x.7 (1177a.19); trans. Irwin 162.
31. Aristotle, *Ethics* vi.1 (1139a.6) and vi.7 (1141b.10); trans. Irwin 86, 91.

32. Aristotle, *Ethics* vi.7 (1141b.15) and vi.8 (1142a.15); trans. Irwin 91, 93.
33. Aristotle, *Ethics* iii.2 (1111.b9); trans. Irwin 33.
34. See Edith Sylla, "Autonomous and Handmaiden Science," in *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning*, ed. John Murdoch and Edith Sylla (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science 26, Boston: D.Reidel, 1975) 355.
35. Aristotle, *Ethics* 6.11 (1143b 14); trans. Irwin 96.
36. Lynch, *Visions* 90–9.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. For a discussion of Pandarus as dramatist see Saul N. Brody, "Making a Play for Criseyde: the Staging of Pandarus's House in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Speculum* 73 (1998) 115–140.
2. Barry Windeatt suggests something of this in the introduction of his edition of the poem, in which he describes Chaucer as: "engaged in a 'paynted proces' (II, 424), in something which suggest the analogy of processes involved in painting and in some forms of printing and film: he overlays the existing structure [of Boccaccio's *Filostato*] with his own tones so that actions, speeches, sequences of events, are seen in a different light." This light and these tones are not merely metaphoric, however, as Chaucer actually adds a substantial imagery of light and darkness throughout his translation of his source. "The 'Troilus' as Translation," in Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus & Criseyde*, ed. Windeatt, 3–24 (New York: Longman, 1984); quotation from 4–5.
3. See esp. under "mene"(3:2,38&5) in the *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Sherman M. Kuhn and John Reidy (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975).
4. "Proces," as the word is used in the text has many overlapping connotations—narrative, logical, legal, and even medical. All, however, involve an act occurring in time (2.268, 292, 485, 1615). Also see Kaye: "As soon as one considered the *process* of valuation and admitted the variable factor of *indigentia*, one entered the realm of geometric [as opposed to arithmetic] equalization" (135).
5. Nichole Oresme, *Nicole Oresme and the Medieval Geometry of Qualities and Motions: A Treatise on the Uniformity and Difformity of Intensities Known as "Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum,"* 1.1, ed. and tr. Marshall Clagett (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1968) 164–5; quoted in Kaye, 202.
6. Peter John Olivi, *Tractatus de emptiõibus et venditiõibus, de usuris, de restitutionibus*, in *Un trattato di economia politica francescana: il "De emptiõibus et venditiõibus, de usuris, de restitutionibus" di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*, ed. Giacomo Todeschini (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1980) 53; quoted and trans. in Kaye 124.

7. Cicero, *De inventione* II.1–3, trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949) 167–8.
8. See Kaye: “In a number of passages in the *De moneta*, Nicole Oresme showed that he, like Buridan, made the connection between money as measure and the most delicate calculations based on self-interest. . . . His observation that merchant activity was determined by the measurement of self-interest even when such interest violated the law and interests of the *civitas* underlined the distinction between the new calculation and older scholastic requirements of individual judgment and responsibility” (160). See also 132, 222–3, 245.
9. For additional related uses of the term “borwe” in the text, see 2.965, 5.1664.
10. That is, Criseyde’s thoughtful assessment of the letter is ultimately based on an affirmative gesture of *trust* in its value on her part, for which she instructs Pandarus to “aquite” Troilus—that is, pay him back in kind.
11. “And so we must attend to the undemonstrated remarks and beliefs of experienced and older people or of prudent people, no less than to demonstrations. For these people see correctly because experience has given them their eye.” Aristotle, *Ethics* vi.11 (1143b.13–14); trans. Irwin 96.
12. See Chapter Two note 23.
13. For an account of the prevalence of the topos in medieval thought and literature, and of medieval psychological interpretations of Paris’s judgment in general, see Margaret J. Ehrhard, *The Judgment of the Trojan Prince Paris in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1987), esp. 98–102, where she discusses Bersuire’s allegoresis of Pallas, Juno, and Venus as *ratio*, *memoria*, and *voluntas*, respectively.
14. Aristotle, *Ethics* (vi.12 (1144a.25); trans. Irwin 97.
15. Aristotle, *Ethics* vi.12–13 (1144a.24–1144b.4); trans. Irwin 98.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. See the comparison of Aquinas and Bonaventure on the relation of the soul and its faculties in Clement M. O’Donnell, *The Psychology of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas* (Catholic University of America Philosophical Studies 36, Washington: CUA, 1937) 50–60.
2. See Augustine, *The Trinity* 10.11.17–18, trans. Stephen McKenna (The Fathers of the Church 45, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1963). Also see the discussion of these attributes in Marcia Colish, *The Mirror of Language* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1968) 51–3.
3. From the Arabic *dhulquarnayn*, meaning “two-horned,” referring to the shape of the diagram. Thomas Elwood Hart, who argues that the theorem forms the basis of the structure of *Troilus and Criseyde*, points out that

Euclid's forty-seventh proposition was fundamental to Chartrian cosmography as well as to the sacred geometry of Gothic architecture. See his "Medieval Structuralism: 'Dulcarnoun' and the Five-book Design of Chaucer's *Troilus*," *Chaucer Review* 16:2 (1981): 129–70, esp. 136–38 and 163 n.28.

4. For a discussion of the relation between "dulcarnoun" and *fuga miserorum* or *eleufuga* see Hart 138: "There are Pythagorean triangles whose sides are rational, like the most fundamental and famous one, the triangle with sides three and four and hypotenuse five. . . . But the hypotenuse of the simplest, the diagonally halved square or isosceles right triangle, is found by multiplying the side not by some whole number or fraction expressible in integers, but by the irrational square root of two; the hypotenuse of a square is always irrational relative to its sides and therefore can only be approximated in a ratio of integers."
5. In his *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), Alexander Murray examines the notion of "reasonableness" in medieval culture, distinguishing two traditions of medieval rationality: one literary and the other mathematical; one rooted in the meditative practices of reading and prayer characteristic of monastic culture, the other in the scientific culture of the universities. Murray suggests that although these attitudes were not mutually exclusive, they increasingly came to be regarded as distinct modes of thought as emotion and reason gradually came to be regarded as antinomial. See esp. 4–14, 401–404. Criseyde's practice of "right reason" draws upon both currents by framing the latter within the former.
6. See her *Book of Memory* 197–202. Carruthers associates the process with meditative reading but specifically examines it as an element of the process of composition; quotation from 201.
7. "Sleighly" meaning "prudently" or "wisely," rather than "guilefully." See n.4 in Arthur Mizener's, "Character and Action in the Case of Criseyde," in *Chaucer's Troilus: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stephen Barney (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1980) 69–70; first published in *PMLA* 54 (1939): 65–81.
8. The axiom "*facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*," is sometimes reversed to mean "man should do *quod in se est* because Christ has already done *quod in se est*. In other words, Christ has placed man under an obligation to respond to him." McGrath, *Iustitia* 83.
9. See Book I of John Duns Scotus's, *A Treatise on God as First Principle: A Revised latin Text of the De primo principio Translated into English Along with Two Related Questions From an Early Commentary on the Sentences*, ed. and trans. Allan B. Wolter (Chicago: Forum Books, 1966). See also Scotus's *Quaestiones in metaphysicam*, ix.q.15. n.4, in *Opera omnia* 7: 608b, where he divides all active powers into those of nature or will and argues the paradoxical case that the intellect is actually "irrational" in the sense that it is determined by the presence of evident truth, where the will is rational because it is able to choose reasonably.

10. The two passages Criseyde cites contain references that are in the *Roman* and its prose redactions, but not in the *Thebaid*: the story of Oedipus and Laius is not treated at all in Statius, nor is Amphiaraus identified in Statius as a bishop. Boyd Ashby Wise argues that Chaucer could have deduced these from the *Thebaid*; however, he also makes a convincing argument that Chaucer was acquainted with the *Roman* or one of its variants. *The Influence of Statius upon Chaucer* (New York: Phaeton, 1967) 127–37. The *Roman* is, however, more a tale of love than the *Thebaid*, in that the love between Atys and Ismene is given a more prominent role in the narrative, and a second romantic relationship is created between Antigone and Parthonepeus.
11. See Robert W. Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) 56–58: “The juxtaposition of Antigone’s complaint about postponed sexual gratification and Athes’ death marks chivalry as an ironic topos within the imagined world of the *Roman de Thèbes*” (57).
12. Winthrop Wetherbee, “‘Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano.’ Dante, Statius, and the narrator of Chaucer’s *Troilus*,” *Vernacular Poetics in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lois Ebin (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1987) 153–176.
13. “The primary significance of Statius, then, for Chaucer as for Dante, would have been largely symbolic: he stands for a kind of spiritual enlightenment accessible only through a profound experience of great poetry and impossible to describe in objective terms.” Wetherbee, “‘Per te poeta fui’” 160. For other discussions of the Theban material in *Troilus and Criseyde*, see David Anderson, “Theban History in Chaucer’s *Troilus*,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 4 (1982): 109–133; and Catherine Sanok, “Criseyde, Cassandre, and the Thebaid: Women and the Theban Subtext of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 20 (1998): 41–71. Anderson takes note of the fact that Chaucer’s contemporaries regarded the Theban war as having taken place historically just before the Trojan war, and that the references in the text to the Thebes material serve to set up parallels between the events that led up to both conflicts. Sanok makes an good case for the fact that Chaucer’s use of this material explores “the theme of women’s vulnerability to martial violence that is so powerfully explored by Statius” (44). Although Sanok’s intertextual reading is insightful and provocative, however, her arguments depend in part on the assumption that Criseyde is reading the *Thebaid*, not a vernacular version, an argument I find unconvincing.
14. Both Oedipus and Laius participate in the unravelling of their interpenetrating fates by seeking and then acting upon special knowledge from the oracle of Apollo.
15. In the *Thebaid* Amphiaraus attempts to hide himself to avoid taking part in the conflict until his hiding place is betrayed by his wife, Eriphyle.

16. *Le Roman de Thèbes*, ed. Guy Raynaud de Lage (2 vols., Paris: Honoré Champion, 1966) 2: 158 (5055–58); trans. John Smartt Coley, *Le Roman de Thèbes: The Story of Thebes* (New York: Garland, 1986) 113 (4816–19).
17. In the *Thebaid*, there is no painted chariot; however, Amphiareus shares his chariot with Apollo himself, as the god provides assistance and advice to him in battle. Statius, *Thebaid* 7.754–9, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 187.
18. As Cassandre will demonstrate in her geneology of Diomedes (5.1450–1519).
19. As Mary Carruthers indicates, rubrics “are part of the apparatus of a text—aiding its mnemonic *divisio*, surely, but deliberately inviting memorial *compositio* as well, the recollective process by means of which a particular reader engages a particular text (with all that includes) on a particular occasion. *Book of Memory* 256.
20. Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 169. By “Petrarch” Carruthers refers to his persona, “Francesco,” in a fictitious dialog between Francesco and Augustine of Hippo that appears in Petrarch’s posthumous *Secretum*. Francesco has just given a reading of the account of a storm in *Aeneid* 1.52–57, in which he interprets the passage as a caution against the sin of anger. “Ego autem, singula verba discutiens, audivi indignationem, audivi luctatam, audivi tempestates sonoras, audivi murmur ac fremitum . . . Audivi rursum regem in arc sedentem, audivi sceptrum tenentem, audivi prementem et vinclis ac carcere frenantem” [“As I carefully study every word, I have heard with my ears the fury, the rage, the roar of the winds; I have heard the trembling of the mountain and the din. Notice how well it applies to the tempest of anger . . . I have heard the king, sitting on his high place, his sceptre grasped in his hand, subduing, binding in chains, and imprisoning those rebel blasts”]. Francesco Petrarca, *Prose*, ed. G. Marelotti (Milan: Riccardi, 1955); quoted and translated in Carruthers 168, 329 n.48. Augustine goes on to approve the reading, despite the case that he knows Virgil may have intended nothing of the sort when he composed the passage.
21. For an account of these thematics in women’s literary culture in late medieval England, see Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints’ Lives and Women’s Literary Culture 1150–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 1–17. See also Wogan-Browne’s essay: “Clerc u lai, muïne u dame: Women and Anglo-Norman Hagiography in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” *Women and Literature in Britain 1150–1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 61–85, where she discusses the way in which female readers in the Middle Ages appropriated hagiographic writings for their own use: “. . . there is often, even in stereotypical representation of women, the potential of slippage between particular hagiographic texts and their readers’ responses to them. Some women . . . seem to have used hagiography for their own purposes, and in (especially) the

genre's sophisticated examples, meaning is in any case complex and to a significant extent negotiable between reader and text, rather than automatically fixed by the text" (64).

22. "Criseyde's alternative to Pandarus's romance script gives her a position outside the fantasy reading of herself as romance heroine." Wogan-Brown, *Saints Lives* 117 n.75.
23. Criseyde poses a series of dialectical syllogisms or *consequentia*. The most useful comparison of dialectical and demonstrative syllogisms is still to be found in Robert Kilwardby's *De ortu scientiarum*, ed. Albert G. Judy (London: The British Academy and the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1976) esp. 191–5 (lvii.555–67).
24. "That Troilus's gesture, waxing red for embarrassment, both mimics and initiates a reciprocal gesture is immediately specified." Stanbury, "Lovers Gaze" 237.
25. Grosseteste, Bacon, and Witelo all devoted considerable attention to scientific and philosophical problems of the rainbow having to do with its colors, arc, and location with respect to the viewer. For an excellent general history of the subject, see Carl B. Boyer, *The Rainbow: From Myth to Mathematics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 85–142.
26. See the discussion of Chaucer's use of the concept of the "white thing" in Yager 393–404. "'The white,' then, has a double function in academic discussions: it can refer to something readily visible or apparent or to an object whose identity is unknown. While 'white things' are visually manifest, their significance can be misunderstood" (397).
27. For a brief discussion of the nightingale theme in Troilus and Criseyde, see Marvin Mudrick, "Chaucer's Nightingales," in Barney 91–99; originally published in *The Hudson Review* 10 (1957): 88–95.
28. Criseyde's dream is a further permutation of Chaucer's experiments with the literary dream vision in which he develops what J. Stephen Russell terms an "*insomnium*-revelation," defined as: "a somatic event that reveals, first, that personal or somatic experiences are the only true experiences, and second, that the emotional or spiritual ground of these experiences, when felt and shared, is the only true, holy, and worthy response to the ritual drama of human life." *The English Dream Vision: of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988) 142.
29. On Aristotle's influence on late-medieval dream theory see Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 83–89.
30. From the narrator's recapitulation, we can surmise that the "bokes" Casandre refers to primarily mirror the form and matter found in Statius's *Thebaid*, but also include other material not found in Statius. The story of the boar and the Calydonian hunt (5.1464–79), for instance, is taken from *Metamorphoses* 8.270–525; the reference to the burning of Thebes

- (5.1510) is not found in Statius but appears in the *Roman de Thèbes* 10.131–6.
31. See R. Howard Bloch, “Kinship.” Chapter 2 of his *Etymologies and Genealogies: a Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
 32. In the *Legend of Good Women* Chaucer portrays Alceste as precisely this, a figure for the universal present in the singular, through the image of the daisy, “of alle floures flour” (F53). See the discussions of this point in Lynch, *Visions*, 118–121, and Lisa Kiser, *Telling Classical Tales: Chaucer and the Legend of Good Women* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) 28–70.
 33. Collette, *Species, Phantasms, and Images* 95–97; quotations from 96. Collette attributes Dorigen’s fixation as wholly pre-rational: “The rocks become an obsession with Dorigen because her will, weakened by her separation from her husband, cannot order the phantasms of the rocks into their proper place” (96). I would argue that Dorigen’s fixation on the blackness of the rocks, as well as on the examples of honorable suicide, stand as metaphors for her fixation on universal truth and the logical necessity conditioned by it.
 34. See, for instance, Richard Middleton: “Et hoc etiam testificatur experientia: intellectus enim se habet ad voluntatem, sicut serviens qui portat lucernam ante dominum suum qui nihil facit, nisi ostendere viam, et persuadere, et dominus imperat sibi, ut divertat quocunque sibi placuerit [“Experience also bears witness to this, for the intellect is to the will as a servant who carries a lamp before his master, who does nothing except to show the way and to persuade; and the master commands the servant to turn the lamp in whatever direction pleases him”]. Middleton, *Super quatuor libros Sententiarum* ii.d.38.a.2.q.4, (Brescia: Vincenzo di Sabbio, 1591, repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1963); quoted and translated in Kent 139. See also Kent 132. The parody works two ways. Where the figure serves as an image of Troilus’s soul, Troilus, taking the part of the will, ironically has no will of his own with which to command, and Pandarus’s rationality leaves much to be desired as a source of illumination and guidance. As a figure for Pandarus’s soul it indicates that his will acts blindly by reversing places with reason, who follows rather than leads the way. The image is therefore indicative of the fact that Troilus places too much confidence in the ability of the intellect to lead the way unaided by volition, while Pandarus does just the reverse.
 35. These “circumstances” (who?, what?, where?, why?, when?) are employed by the confessor to aid the penitent in developing a grasp of the sin confessed in the context of particular conditions and influences. See Tentler, *Sin and Confession* 116–120, and D. W. Robertson, “A Note on the Classical Origin of ‘Circumstances’ in the Medieval Confessional,” *Studies in Philology* 43 (1946): 6–14.

36. See Kaye 126, n36.
37. See, for instance, Dinshaw, "Reading Like a Man" 56–58, who views the exchange as part of a pattern of "trafficking in women," in the narrative, through which power relations between men are negotiated.
38. As Dinshaw notes, when Criseyde "chooses to shift her allegiance from Troilus to Diomedes, she in fact acts in the best interests of Troy in the repair of its losses in battle and in the reestablishment of truce or temporary equilibrium of the siege." "Reading Like a Man" 57.
39. See, for instance Oresme: "Rursum aurum et argentum propter tales mutationes et impeioraciones minorantur in regno, quia non obstante custodia deferuntur ad extra, ubi carius allocantur, Homines enim libencius conantur suam monetam portare ad loca, ubi eam credunt magis valere. Ex hoc igitur sequitur diminutio materie monetarum in regno" ["Again, such alterations and debasements diminish the amount of gold and silver in the realm, since these metals, despite any embargo, are carried abroad, where they command a higher value. For men try to take their money to the places where they believe it to be worth the most. And this reduces the material for money in the realm"]. *De moneta* 32; quoted and trans. in Kaye 160.
40. Stephen R. Guthrie, "Shall and Will in Troilus and Criseyde," *English Studies* 6 (1992): 481–92; quotation from 488.
41. "Truth," and its companion lyric, "Stedfastnesse," can, like our own text, be read together as a kind of covenantal balancing-act.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Richard Utz also argues the point that the hiatus between the celebration of earthly love in the narrative and the "leap of faith" of the epilogue reflects the influence of the doctrine of capacity and volition and "the separation of the formerly unified concept of truth in revealed truth and the truth of human *ratio*." "Negotiating the Paradigm" 17–22.
2. Linda Tarte Holley points out that these lines recall Thomas Bradwardine's paradox on the nature of God: "Deus est sphaera infinita, cuius centrum est ubique et circumferentia nusquam ["God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere"]. Bradwardine, *De causa Dei contra Pelagium et De virtute causarum, ad suos Mertonenses libri tres, iussu Georgii Abbot opera et studio Henrici Savillii ex scriptis codicibus nunc primum editi* I.5, ed. Henry Saville (Londoni: Ex Officina Nortoniana apud Ioannem Billium, 1618) 179, trans. from Edward Grant, *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974) 559. See Holley 92.
3. Holley 89–90.
4. The question of Troilus's place in the heavens is an unsettled one, however. All but two manuscripts of the poem read "seventhe" sphere, not "eighththe."

Yet Benson and many other editors prefer “eighthe,” following Chaucer’s source (Boccaccio) and assuming scribal error. There is also the problem concerning from which end of the heavens the count begins. My reading places him at a logical breaking point, visually speaking, between the visible and the invisible. See Benson in Chaucer, *Riverside* 1057 n.1809–10.

5. Peter Dronke, “The Conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde,” *Medium Aevum* 34 (1964): 47–52.

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